

## **Introduction**

The Sri Lankan Society for Microbiology (SSM) was founded in 2010 with the aim of bringing together clinicians, scientists and students involved in Microbiology under a single umbrella with a view to promote an integrated multidisciplinary approach towards the study of basic and applied microbiology.

The SSM aims to disseminate knowledge and skills pertaining to microbiology within Sri Lanka, to publish research and scientific information related to microbiology and provide spaces to interact and share knowledge.

The objectives of SSM are to disseminate knowledge and skills pertaining to microbiology within Sri Lanka, to publish journals and books and convene meetings, workshops and colloquia, to promote basic and applied research in Microbiology and related areas and to promote collaboration among members in all areas pertaining to the discipline of microbiology

The Sri Lankan Journal of Infectious Diseases (SLJID) is the official journal of the SSM. Published biannually, the SLJID seeks to provide a peer-reviewed medium for communication of findings and perspectives among the professional disciplines involved in the field of infectious diseases. Its goals are to increase conversations about infectious diseases in order to improve both management and prevention of infectious diseases in Sri Lanka and elsewhere and to facilitate discussion on microbiology in relation to resource limitations.

The Annual Academic Sessions of the SSM is another major arm of the academic activities of the SSM. This event has been held annually in October since 2011 as a conference that showcases local researchers and their work in any field of Microbiology. The annual conference regularly attracts a crowd of close to 80 – 100 scientists, predominantly young researchers. In addition to oral and poster presentation of abstracts, the annual academic sessions of the SSM have plenary sessions and motivational speeches titled “What Microbiology has given to me”. Another regular feature of the traditional SSM conferences were the ‘meet the expert’ sessions where young scientists could discuss with more experienced scientists on different themes in research and publishing.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference was held for the first time as an e-conference. This was hosted online on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2020 from the Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya. Twelve abstracts were presented as oral presentations and sixteen presented as e-posters. This supplement contains the abstracts of these oral and poster presentations. The consent of all authors has been obtained for publication.

The organizing committee of the conference and the council of SSM feel that making these abstracts widely available through open access gives publicity to young researchers. In addition, this makes the work citable and paves way for collaborations. We hope this will enable the local scientific work to be available to the wider scientific community.

Co Editors SLJID