



Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS)

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SPECIAL ARTICLE

9th Congress of the Asian Federation of Laboratory Animal Science Associations (9th AFLAS Congress) – Sharing experiences

By Prof. Mangala Gunatilake

Preamble

AFLAS is the umbrella organization for LAS associations of Asian Countries established on 29th November 2003 with six founding associations representing Japan, Korea, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, and China. Currently there are 11 member associations which include founding associations and from Malaysia, Singapore, India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka.

At the AFLAS Council meeting held on November 28, 2015, in Singapore, SLALAS was officially accepted and confirmed as the 11th member of AFLAS with my participation as the Founder President and Managing Director of SLALAS.

9th AFLAS Congress on ‘ONE HEALTH ONE WELFARE’

AFLAS, at the time of celebrating 20 years, its 9th Congress was held after a gap of 5-years at the International Convention Centre (ICC) of beautiful Jeju Island, South Korea from 13th to 15th September with the participation of scientists from across the globe.



SLALAS Representation was made possible

Information on this Congress was obtained from Dr. Arvind Ingle of India as no information was divulged or available at the AFLAS website. Thanks to Dr. Ingle, more information about the Congress could be obtained from the new Secretary General of AFLAS. The Korean Association for laboratory animal science who was responsible in organizing the Congress, has created several avenues for maximum participation of representatives from the member countries. The opportunities they created included.

1. A speaker to talk on Role of the veterinarian in the Animal facility (Free registration, 3-day accommodation, airfare)
2. Travel Award for a young scientist (1000 USD with free registration)
3. Young Scientists Camp representative (Free registration, accommodation, and airfare)
4. President of the member Association (Free registration and 3-day accommodation)

Process adopted

1. *Selection of the Speaker*

Although I could have made use of the speaker opportunity as the current President of SLALAS, I decided to provide the opportunity to **Dr. Mayuri Thammitiyagodage** of Medical Research Institute after obtaining consent from the SLALAS Executive Committee. No member objected to my proposal.

This gave an opportunity to appreciate her continuous contributions to the SLALAS since its inception. The package given to the speaker was worth approximately 1.0 m LKR.

2. *Selection of the Travel Award winner*

On my directions, the notice inviting applications according to the given criteria was circulated among all the life members by the Honorary Secretary of SLALAS.

SLALAS received 3 applications. Criteria used to assess the applications are given in Table 1.

Assessment and selection based on the identified criteria are given in Table 2.

Table 1 – Application assessment criteria

Criteria laid down by AFLAS organizers	SLALAS Criteria for the selection of the most eligible candidate
<p>A1. The winner should attend AFLAS 2023 with a poster presentation.</p> <p>A2. Carrier to be involved in the lab animal field, not only in their own country but also in the Asia Pacific region (preferable)</p> <p>A3. Strong motivation and promotion to lead the lab animal field.</p> <p>A4. Qualified in laboratory animal science field</p>	<p>S1. Title and structured abstract of the poster presentation related to LAS discipline (word limit of the abstract will be 250 words)</p> <p>S2. List of Publications (Only journal articles. Presentations are not considered) related to LAS discipline in the past 5-years</p> <p>S3. <u>One A4 page</u> summary of your contributions to SLALAS</p> <p>S4. Details of your contribution to the laboratory animal field at local and international level</p>

Table 2 - Assessment of applications and selection based on the identified criteria

Criteria	Applicant 1	Applicant 2	Applicant 3
A1	√	√	√
A2	√ at local level	√ at local level	√ at local level
A3	√	√	√
A4	√	√	√
S1	√	√	√
S2	√	√	√
S3	√	√	√
S4	√ at local level	√ at local level	√ at local level
Submission of CV	X	√	√
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Abstract describes an intervention. • Describes a painful procedure adopted during the intervention. • Minimal application of 3Rs although in vitro procedures are described briefly in the abstract. • The information included in the abstract has been presented at different fora and published too (as per the online Profile). • SLALAS has given opportunities several times – JALAS award, KALAS Award and FABAs free workshop attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The abstract describes an intervention with the involvement of laboratory-bred rabbits • Describes an assessment and application of the 'Refinement' concept of 3Rs • No opportunities were granted to the applicant by SLALAS previously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The abstract is not based on any research or intervention • The abstract includes an overview related to LAS • SLALAS has given an opportunity - FABAs free workshop attendance
Qualified for the Travel Award or not based on above-mentioned criteria/information	Not qualified	Qualified	Not qualified

3. *Selection of the Young Scientist Camp representative*

SLALAS received 3 applications for this too and evaluation was done according to a set of given criteria (Table 3). Assessment is given in Table 4.

Table 3 – Criteria used for evaluation of applications

Criteria laid down by AFLAS organizers	SLALAS Criteria for the selection of the most eligible candidate
<p>A1. Member should be under 40, in the field of laboratory animal science.</p> <p>A2. He/she should join 2-day workshop and friendship program prior to AFLAS Congress on 3rd (SUN), September 2023 near Incheon International Airport</p> <p>A3. He/she will prepare his/her research talk and perspective view and idea on future aspects of laboratory animal science in the Asia Pacific.</p>	<p>S1. Title and structured abstract of the talk (word limit of the abstract will be 250 words)</p> <p>S2. List of Publications (Only journal articles. Presentations are not considered) related to LAS discipline in the past 3-years</p> <p>S3. One A4 page summary of your contributions to SLALAS in the past 5 years</p>

Table 4 – Assessment of applications based on criteria

Criteria	Applicant 1	Applicant 2	Applicant 3
A1	√ (37 y)	√ (38 y & 7 m)	√ (39 y & 6 m)
A2	√	√	√
A3	√	√	√
S1	X	√	√
S2	√	√	√
S3	√	√	√
Submission of CV	√	X	√
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No abstract was submitted No opportunities were given by SLALAS to the applicant previously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Abstract describes an intervention. Describes a painful procedure adopted during the intervention. Minimal application of 3Rs although in vitro procedures are described briefly in the abstract. The information included in the abstract has been presented at different fora and published too (as per the online Profile). SLALAS has given opportunities several times – JALAS award, KALAS Award and FABA free workshop attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The abstract is not based on any research or intervention The abstract includes an overview related to LAS SLALAS has given an opportunity - FABA free workshop attendance
Qualified for the Young Scientist Camp or not based on the above-mentioned criteria/information	Qualified without meeting the abstract criteria	Not qualified as CV was not submitted	Qualified (but the abstract is not acceptable)

A selection was not done on the two candidates who were considered qualified, for the Young Scientists Camp but all these information were sent to Congress organizers for them to select the ideal candidate. According to their selection, Applicant 1 received the opportunity.

4. Participation as the President of SLALAS

a. Pre-congress Symposium

A half-a-day pre-congress symposium on ‘Fostering High Quality of Animal Welfare by International Education and Collaboration’ hosted by AAALAC international was held on 12th September at the ICC for which I participated and contributed actively during the Q & A session.

b. *Pre-meeting of the Speakers*

All the speakers of member organizations had been invited for the pre-meeting held at the Seaes Hotel & Resort on 12th September 2023 for presentations about the member associations followed by dinner. The presentation template was provided by the organizers to collect similar information (about the speaker, membership, training & education, Diplomat status, and Legislations) from all the member associations. As Dr. Mayuri Thammitiyagodage was the identified speaker, she collated and made the presentation with the support of the Honorary Secretary of SLALAS. However, her flight arrangement did not make her attendance possible during the scheduled programme. Therefore, as the Founder and current President, I attended the meeting and shared the information of the SLALAS.

c. *AFLAS Council meeting*

This was held on 13th September with the participation of all Presidents or their representatives of member associations. Only one application has been received to select the host association for the 10th AFLAS Congress. It was by Chinese Association for LAS (CALAS) and they did a presentation detailing the facilities available and a brief outline of the programme. Dr. Qin Chaun, the President-CALAS accepted the AFLAS flag as the next host country in 2025.

d. *My Participation in other events*

Opening Ceremony & Welcome Reception

Symposium on Role of Lab Animal Veterinarian (LAV) in Asia and Panel Discussion

Several other selected symposia and Plenary lectures

Poster presentations and Booth Exhibition

Gala Dinner

Closing Ceremony

e. *Poster presentations completed at the 9th AFLAS Congress*

- SLALAS Promotes the Journey with Laboratory Animals Beyond 3Rs

Mangala Gunatilake

Proceedings of the 9th AFLAS Congress, 2023, Jeju, Korea. PS-A-003, p.208

- Assessment of Culture of Care (COC) in Sri Lankan animal facilities and the role of lab animal science (LAS) education in establishing a good COC
Dulshara Sachini Amarasekera, Hasanthi Rathnadiwakara, Kalpani Ratnayake, Ureshani Karunaratna, **Mangala Gunatilake**

Proceedings of the 9th AFLAS Congress, 2023, Jeju, Korea. PS-A-006, p.209

- Quantification of the Level of Pain and Stress During Ear Artery Bleeding in Laboratory Rabbits

Hasanthi Rathnadiwakara, Mayuri Thammitiyagodage, Ramani Karunakaran, Florence Cliquet, Jean-Christopher Thibault, **Mangala Gunatilake**

Proceedings of the 9th AFLAS Congress, 2023, Jeju, Korea. PS-A-005, p.209

- Systematic Review on Cell-Mediated Immunity Against Rabies
Vaccination in Laboratory-Bred Dogs

Hasanthi Rathnadiwakara, Sachini Amarasekera, Florence Cliquet, Jean-Christopher Thibault, **Mangala Gunatilake**

Proceedings of the 9th AFLAS Congress, 2023, Jeju, Korea. PS-H-036, p. 288



Following uploading the poster on the 1st day of the Congress



Posing for a photograph during the coffee break



Welcome reception during a congress is an opportunity to enhance fellowship among scientists

The 9th AFLAS Congress was a platform to enhance international collaborations while sharing our research findings. During the sessions, invitations were extended to Presidents of the member associations to participate in the 11th International Conference and Scientific Sessions of SLALAS. We also made use of the opportunity to roam around during our free time to witness several beautiful places in Jeju Island.

It was a very happy moment for me to meet an eminent scientist from Japan. This led to establish a fruitful collaboration with Prof. Toru Takeo of Kumamoto University, Japan. I invited him which he humbly accepted to conduct a workshop in Sri Lanka. Due to limited time availability until January 2024, he agreed to conduct this workshop during the next President's tenure of office. This will enable SLALAS to step into a new era in the LAS field.

My experience attending the Asian Federation of Laboratory Animal Science Associations (AFLAS) Congress 2023, South Korea as the Travel Award Winner

By Dr. Hasanthi Rathnadiwakara

On behalf of the AFLAS Congress 2023 and the Korean Association for Laboratory Animal Science (KALAS), SLALAS has invited its members to apply for the Travel Award 2023. Based on the information provided, I have applied for the award by sending all the required information. Following the evaluation criteria of the SLALAS and AFLAS, I had the privilege to be selected as the Travel Award winner from Sri Lanka and had the opportunity to participate in the AFLAS Congress 2023.

I have received the free registration for the conference and the conference was held from 13th to 15th of September. On the 13th I was able to attend the welcome reception together with other Sri Lanka representatives and all the other conference attendees.



Sri Lankan representatives at the Welcome reception on 13th September.
Dr. Sachini Amarasekara, Prof. Mangala Gunatilake, Dr. Mayuri Thammitiyagodage and Myself (left to right)

During the conference on the 14th and 15th, I attended some selected symposia and plenary lectures. I had the opportunity to meet scientists and laboratory animal researchers from different parts of the Asian region and also visited several booth exhibitions.

On the 15th all the Travel Award recipients had done their poster presentations during the poster session, based on the abstracts submitted for the Travel Award. Apart from that I had the privilege of submitting another two abstracts for the poster session.

Poster presentations:

- **The 9th AFLAS Congress 2023 Travel Award.** Quantification of the Level of Pain and Stress During Ear Artery Bleeding in Laboratory Rabbits
Hasanthi Rathnadiwakara, Mayuri Thammitiyagodage, Ramani Karunakaran, Florence Cliquet, Jean-Christopher Thibault, Mangala Gunatilake
Proceedings of the 9th AFLAS Congress, 2023, Jeju, Korea. PS-A-005, p.209
- Systematic Review on Cell-Mediated Immunity Against Rabies Vaccination in Laboratory-Bred Dogs
Hasanthi Rathnadiwakara, Sachini Amarasekera, Florence Cliquet, Jean-Christopher Thibault, Mangala Gunatilake

Proceedings of the 9th AFLAS Congress, 2023, Jeju, Korea. PS-H-036, p. 288

- Assessment of Culture of Care (COC) in Sri Lankan animal facilities and the role of lab animal science (LAS) education in establishing a good COC
Dulshara Sachini Amarasekera, **Hasanthi Ratnadiwakara**, Kalpani Ratnayake, Ureshani Karunarathna, Mangala Gunatilake

Proceedings of the 9th AFLAS Congress, 2023, Jeju, Korea. PS-A-006, p.209



Poster Presentation

Six scientists from the Asian region have been selected as the Travel Award winners and they have been awarded KRW 1000,000 at the closing ceremony of the Conference.

The rest of the Travel Award Winners are as follows.

- Mengping Wei - Capital Medical University, China
- Noriko Tosa - Hokkaido University, Japan
- Uddhav Chaudhar - ICMR – National Institute for Research in Reproductive and Child Health, India
- Anwar Norazit - Universiti Malaya, Malaysia
- Alisha Wehdnesday Reyes - University of the Philipines Los Baños, Philippines



Travel Award Winners at the closing ceremony

It was a great opportunity for me to represent Sri Lanka with all the other Sri Lanka representatives, Prof. Mangala Gunatilake, Dr. Mayuri Thammitiyagodage, Dr. Sachini Amarasekara, and attend this prestigious conference which occurred after several years. The conference gave us the privilege to meet experts in the field of laboratory animal science and share our knowledge and experience. We also had the opportunity to identify experts in the field who are willing to support SLALAS and Sri Lankan Scientists to expand our knowledge in the field possibly by making collaborations.

Finally, I am thankful to KALAS and AFLAS for the opportunity given and most importantly SLALAS for selecting me for this Travel Award.

My experience attending the Young Scientists Camp (YSC), Asian Federation of Laboratory Animal Science Associations (AFLAS) Congress 2023, South Korea

By Dr. Sachini Amarasekara

The Young Scientists Camp (YSC) of the Asian Federation for Laboratory Animal Science (AFLAS) Congress 2023 was held on September 9-11th, 2023 at the Seoul National University Siheung Campus, Hotel & Convention Center. YSC was hosted by the Korean Association for Laboratory Animal Science (KALAS) which hosted the AFLAS Congress this year. I was honoured to represent Sri Lanka at YSC and to be one of the 15 participants from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and South Korea who received the YSC award.

YSC started with the opening address delivered by Prof. Jinwoong Bok from Yonsei University followed by a special lecture on "Era of new viral emerging disease X and preparedness in one health perspective" by Prof. Daesub Song, Seoul National University. Prof. Song talked about Korea's readiness for emerging viral diseases highlighting the importance of developing diagnostics and therapeutics for the diseases before they become a significant burden on global economies and public health. The YSC committee members; Prof. Ji-Young Cha [Gachon University], Kyung-Hee Chun [Yonsei University], JaeHyung Koo [Daegu Gyeongbuk Institute of Science & Technology (DGIST)], and Eun-Woo Lee [Korea Research Institute of Bioscience and Biotechnology] also introduced themselves and talk about their areas of research.

All YSC participants were grouped into a group of 4 from its initiation and I was privileged to have Dr. Satohiro Nakao (Sato), Center for Animal Resources and Development, Kumamoto University, Japan, Dr. Candice Ho, Singapore Eye Research Institute (SERI), Singapore, and Warisraporn Tangchang, Chungnam National University, South Korea as my group members. Meeting Sato from Prof. Toru's group during the YSC camp was something that I will treasure in my academic life. The first day of the YSC camp ended with the welcome dinner giving us the opportunity to interact with our group mates, other groups and the YSC committee members.



Young Scientists listening to Prof. Daesub Song, Seoul National University



My group members (left to right) Satohiro Nakao _Center for Animal Resources and Development, Kumamoto University, Candice Ho _Singapore Eye Research Institute (SERI), myself and Warisraporn Tangchang _Chungnam National University



AFLAS 2023 YSC participants with the YSC committee

The second day of the camp was committed to abstract presentations followed by a Q&A session. The YSC committee moderated the session. During this session, I delivered my work based on my poster *Assessment of Culture of Care (COC) in Sri Lankan animal facilities and the role of lab animal science (LAS) education in establishing a good COC*, Dulshara Sachini Amarasekera, Hasanthi Ratnadiwakara, Kalpani Ratnayake, Ureshani Karunarathna, Mangala Gunatilake, *Proceedings of the 9th AFLAS Congress, 2023, Jeju, South Korea. PS-A-006, p.209*. This session was a great opportunity to acquire knowledge, foster new research ideas, get to know the expertise of each of us and initiate collaborative research.

The long abstract presentation session ended with painting-co-work where all the YSC participants joined in painting a 'ONE Health and One Welfare' themed drawing emphasizing harmony, friendship, international networking, and fostering innovative ideas. This poster was displayed at the AFLAS Congress 2023 closing ceremony.



Abstract presentations and the Q & A session



Painting co-work



On the third day all YSC participants and the committee flew to Jeju Island to participate in the AFLAS 2023 Congress. Upon arrival at Jeju, the YSC participants were taken on a short trip to the Camellia Hills; an arboretum on 20 hectares that offers many camellia & other plant species.



The group photograph taken at Camellia Hills

The YSC camp ended successfully after offering a traditional Galchi (Ribbon fish) dinner at the Jeju Island and from 12th September the YSC participants also joined the AFLAS 2023 Congress at Jeju ICC. At the Congress, I joined several selected symposia and Plenary lectures which are based in Immunology and lab animal welfare, joined the poster presentations, booth exhibition, and the gala dinner. Booth Exhibition experience was amazing as it demonstrated the latest technological advances in lab animal science. During the gala dinner we were able to meet several LAS experts in person, exchange ideas, and establish valuable relationships.



Young Scientists at the AFLAS Congress 2023 (left) and Sri Lankan representation at AFLAS 2023 (right); myself, Dr. Mayuri Thammitiyagodage, Prof. Mangala Gunatilake and Dr. Hasanathi Ratnadiwakara (left to right)

In conclusion, YSC award offered opportunity for young scientists to share and exchange scientific experience, present their work to an international audience, meet internationally renowned Professors, and thereby to promote their scientific future and career. Moreover, as a country it was a great opportunity for the Sri Lankan team; Prof. Mangala Gunatilake, Dr. Mayuri Thammitiyagodage, Dr. Hasanthi Ratnadiwakara, and me to identify the experts for our future workshops and identify the area we should focus as a country and streamline SLALAS's objectives accordingly.

I am thankful to KALAS & AFLAS for the opportunity given, SLALAS for the recommendation and importantly, the YSC sponsor *Central Lab. Animal Inc.* for making this YSC camp a reality.

Role of Laboratory Animal Veterinarian in Asia: AFLAS experiences

By Dr. Mayuri Thammitiyagodage, Medical Research Institute

As one of the senior veterinarians in Laboratory Animal Science, I was selected to attend the AFLAS 2023 congress in Korea by the Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS). The pre-meeting session of the AFLAS congress was held on 17th May 2023 via Zoom and Je Kyung Seong from Seoul National University chaired the technical session by representing the Korean Association for Laboratory Animal Science. Laboratory Animal Veterinarians from China, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Hong Kong, and India shared their experiences representing the respective associations of the country. It was a privilege to represent the country to share nearly 30 years of experience by maintaining the most technically equipped laboratory animal facility at the Medical Research Institute in Sri Lanka.

Workshops conducted by the Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS) to educate young researchers also contributed to the current development of Laboratory Animal Science in the country. SLALAS formulated guidelines to review animal protocols in 2021/2022. According to the presentations done by the participants, some countries have well-established legislation regarding laboratory animal science whilst some countries are still formulating legislation or guidelines to regulate laboratory animal care and welfare. There was a diversity in the technical aspect of laboratory animal science in Asia. A country like Sri Lanka needs technical advancement to be on par with the rest of the Asian countries though the laboratory animal sector reached some advancement within the last 3 decades.

The main seminar on the Role of Laboratory Animal Veterinarians in Asia was held on 13th September 2023 in Alder Garden / The SEAES Hotel. Prof. Seung Hyun Oh from Gachon University, Korea, and Prof. Seung Hyeok Seok from Seoul National University, Korea moderated the technical session. The topic of the role of Laboratory Animal Veterinarians in Asia Pacific and globally was discussed by Dr. Kap Lee, the Role of Laboratory animal Veterinarian in Asia-Pacific Association was discussed by Seung Hyun Oh, Veterinarians in Animal-Based Research Down Under was discussed by Jodi Salinsky from the University of Auckland, New Zealand, the role of designated veterinarians in Finnish academia was discussed by Anna Meller from the University of Helsinki, Finland and Role of ICLAS in projecting education and training opportunities for laboratory animal Professionals across the regions was discussed by Dr. Arvind Ingle from Laboratory Animal Facility in India. Jodi Salinsky, Australia -New Zealand Laboratory Animal Association Executive, emphasizes the good practice guide for the use of animals in research, testing, and teaching. According to the Australian code, the person who is providing oversight of the program of veterinary care, including the care, husbandry, and health of animals and biosecurity in a facility must be competent and hold appropriate veterinary qualifications. It further encourages ensuring that the care and management of animals are under the direction of competent people with **appropriate animal care or veterinary qualifications or experiences**. Compass is their free online course that covers the Australian code and New Zealand guide and welfare. Successful completion of phase 1 of the course and its questionnaire fulfills the mandatory basic training needs of researchers and teachers using animals as well as members of Animal Ethics Committees in Australian and some parts of New Zealand.

The current status and perspectives of Lab Animal Veterinarians from each country were the main themes of the technical session and representatives from each association explained the situation of their country. It was followed by a very informative technical discussion. During this session, fine details that matter in the maintenance of a vivarium were discussed by a very experienced Taiwan veterinarian, and the microbiological status of the vivarium maintained across India was explained by Dr. Ramachandran. This information was very useful in uplifting the current vivarium maintained in Sri Lanka and the experience gained by participating in AFLAS 2023 is very useful for further development of Laboratory Animal Science in Sri Lanka. During this short stay in Korea, not only technical details Sri Lankan participants were able to enjoy the beauty of Jeju Island and the views from the beautiful hotel which was on the beach side.



NEWS

Commemorate and pay tribute to laboratory animals who sacrificed their lives for the betterment of science

By Dr. Hasanthi Rathnadiwakara

Nearly 100 Nobel prizes awarded to Physiology or Medicine until now are animal-based scientific innovations. Therefore, we as researchers/scientists need to respect the enormous sacrifices made by laboratory animals for the benefit of mankind. In 2023, SLALAS has introduced a few novel activities to commemorate the contribution of laboratory animals to the advancement of science and medicine.

The first activity was a **‘Poster competition on Laboratory Animal-Based Research.’**



SPEAK FOR UNSPOKEN



POSTER COMPETITION ON LABORATORY ANIMAL-BASED RESEARCH

ORGANIZED BY ;
SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION FOR LABORATORY ANIMAL SCIENCE

TO COMMEMORATE THE WORLD DAY FOR LABORATORY ANIMALS, 2023

SUBMIT YOUR POSTER, BASED ON LABORATORY ANIMALS, ON OR BEFORE 08th OF MAY 2023

Poster types: E-posters or Hand made posters (Guidelines are provided in the SLALAS website)

Categories:

- Advanced Level students
- Undergraduates
- Open category

For further details contact:

- slasci@gmail.com or
- visit our website - <https://slalas.lk>



**Owners of the best three posters could be invited the annual sessions in 2024, FREE OF CHARGE.
 ** A valuable certificate will be awarded to the winners at the annual conference in 2024

The theme of the competition was ‘Speak for Unspoken’. Applications were called from Advanced Level, Undergraduate, and Open categories. Participants were able to submit their posters as Handmade posters or e-posters. Based on the rules and regulations all the submissions must be self-contained and the reader should be able to comprehend them. This size recommendation was 36" x 48". Participants were advised to send their completed posters to SLALAS via email or registered post on or before the mentioned deadline.

We have received five entries, including four from the Undergraduate Category and one from the Open Category. All five posters were evaluated collectively by the panel of judges.

The poster evaluation was done based on the predefined criteria. In summary, the criteria covered the Title, Organization of the poster, Content/ Merit, Technical response, and Communication. Each criterion was given a defined level of marks which adds up to the final marks.

The three best posters were selected for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places and the names of the winners will be announced during the Award Ceremony at the Annual Conference on 21st January 2024. Their posters will be displayed at the SLALAS Annual Scientific Session and International Conference 2024.

The next activity that was organized was the ‘Art Competition’.



The poster for the SLALAS Art Competition features a vibrant, colorful background with abstract patterns. At the top left is the SLALAS logo, which includes a silhouette of a laboratory animal. The text 'Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS)' is written in white. The main title 'SLALAS ART COMPETITION' is in large, bold, yellow letters. Below the title, a blue banner contains the text 'To commemorate and pay tribute to laboratory animals who sacrificed their lives for the betterment of science'. A list of rules and categories is provided in white text on a dark background. A circular badge highlights the 'Submission Deadline extended until 30th October 2023'. At the bottom, contact information is given in white text on a dark background.

Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS)

SLALAS ART COMPETITION

To commemorate and pay tribute to laboratory animals who sacrificed their lives for the betterment of science

- Art should be done related to the Lab Animal Science discipline
- 3 Categories
 - A/L students
 - Undergraduates
 - Open category

Submission Deadline extended until 30th October 2023

**Further Details: Visit- <https://slalas.lk/>
Contact us: slasci@gmail.com**

Entries were called from Advance Level students, Undergraduates, and open Category with a selected theme related to Laboratory Animal Science Discipline. The art size was instructed as A4 size, and participants were given the chance to use any medium such as pencil, crayon, watercolor, etc. Entries per person were limited to One.

Participants were advised to submit their art to the Secretary, SLALAS, on or before the mentioned deadlines.

The organizing committee has received four entries, including two from the Undergraduate Category, one from the Open Category, and one from the A/L student category. Though the initial plan was to select the best art from each category, based on the entries received, the judging panel has decided to evaluate all four arts collectively.

One best art was selected, and the name of the winner will be announced during the Award Ceremony at the Annual Conference on 21st January 2024. He/ She will receive a “Winner Certificate for the SLALAS Art Competition.” The Winners’ drawing will be displayed on the homepage of SLALAS web for one year and the drawing will be included in the SLALAS Newsletter as well.

All four arts will be displayed at the SLALAS Annual Scientific Session and International Conference 2024 together with the name of the students.

The final activity was the ‘**SLALAS Photography Competition.**’



PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Organized by the Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS) & Medical Research Institute (MRI)

Deadline for Registration
30th October 2023

Cash price for the winner
E-certificate for all participants

To whom?

- Advanced level students
- Undergraduates
- Postgraduates

Registration Link:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeSossd-3IXdJ4jPKWNRQvI9MjS9d7CZFKzaSdDmnPsjz_G_Fg/viewform?usp=sf_link

Further Details: Visit- <https://slalas.lk/>
Contact us: slasci@gmail.com

The Photography Competition was organized in collaboration with the Animal Center, Medical Research Institute (MRI), Colombo. This competition was open to Advanced Level students, Undergraduates, and Postgraduates. Before the competition, a Google form was shared among the interested parties for the pre-registration. Once the registration was completed, participants were given a specific date and time to come to the Animal Center, MRI, and participate in the competition.

The following photo specifications were given to the participants before attending the competition.

- Maximum entries for the competition per registered student are limited to two (2).
- Photos must be a student's original work.
- Only photos taken by digital/mobile phone cameras are accepted.
- Post-processing of the image is limited to cropping and color enhancements, including shadows and highlights only.
- Photo manipulation is not allowed.
- Photo submission must be in JPEG format with at least 300 dpi and a maximum file size of 10 MB.
- Photo must not contain any copyrighted material including artworks and other photos.

Registered participants were advised to bring their digital camera or mobile phone and a laptop computer or a MacBook or a tablet to process and complete the submission according to the laid down criteria. All the Photo/s were advised to be submitted with a photo caption and a brief description (1-2 sentences) of the image captured.

During the competition, participants were allowed to freely move around the designated area where laboratory animals were kept. The animals were taken out of the cages and handled by

staff at the Animal Centre, on the request of the participants to facilitate them in taking photographs. Once the photos were taken, participants were given an hour to complete their submissions.



Participants taking photographs during the competition.

Workshop on Applications of “Cell Cultures” and “MIQE” compliance Real-Time PCR (qPCR) Assay

By Dr. M. G. T. M. Prasadine

The Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS) organized a workshop on “Application of Cell Cultures and MIQE compliance Real-Time PCR (qPCR) Assay” in collaboration with the Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya, Molecular and Nutritional Biochemistry Laboratory (MNBL), Biochemistry Division, Department of Basic Veterinary Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya, and Sri Lanka College of Veterinary Surgeons (SLCVS) was held on November 7–10, 2023, to advance knowledge among professionals, researchers, postgraduate, and undergraduate students. Renowned experts in the field were invited to share their insights, providing participants with exposure to the latest trends and practices in Cell Cultures and MIQE compliance Real-Time PCR (qPCR) Assay.



Prof. C.N.R.A. Alles, Professor in Biochemistry. Head/ Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya, one of the principal resource personnel did a series of lectures on “How to Establish a cell/tissue culture laboratory, Cell signaling and intracellular trafficking, Effects of drugs on cells, What is a cell culture, Stem cell lines Isolation of Primary/ authentic Cell (fibroblasts, Myoblasts, Kidney cells), Hematopoietic and progenitor cell lineages e.g. Osteoclasts, Regulation of cell formation and differentiation”.

Prof. W.D.S.J Wickramasinghe, Professor in Parasitology, Department of Parasitology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya, presented the ‘Basics in “Biosafety Levels” and “biosafety cabinets”’. “Isolation and purification of precursor cells, Cell Counting, Cryopreservation, Storage and Recovery of Cryopreserved Cells” were discussed by Dr. M.G.T.M Prasadine from Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya. Dr. Ruwan Premathilaka from Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya gave an introduction on “Safe Laboratory Practices” and Dr. Dinesha Ambagaspitiya, Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya, discussed on “Atomic absorption spectrometry in cell culture systems”.

The other principal resource personnel, Prof. D.A Satharasinghe, Professor in Veterinary Biochemistry, Department of Basic Veterinary Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya, discussed on “An overview of PCR & Real-time PCR (qPCR), qPCR Assay optimization and validation with MIQE compliance, PCR & gel electrophoresis, Quantitative PCR -Absolute and Relative Quantification, Gene expression Analysis.



A fruitful practical sessions on “Establish a cell/tissue culture laboratory Basic Equipment, Expanded Equipment and Additional Supplies found in a culture lab, cell cultures, Isolation of authentic cells (fibroblasts, Myoblasts, Kidney cells), Preparation and maintenance of Primary/ authentic Cell Cultures, Preparation and maintenance of Primary/ authentic Cell Cultures, Isolation and purification of precursor cells, Cell seeding were conducted by Prof. C.N.R.A. Alles, Dr. M.G.T.M Prasadine and Dr. Dinesha Ambagaspitiya. Moreover, participants demonstrated a significant enhancement in their cell culture skills, as evidenced by improved success rates in experiments and reduced contamination incidents.

Gene expression analysis practical session was conducted by Prof. D.A. Satharasinghe followed by hands on experience for the participants.



The workshop on “Application of Cell Cultures and MIQE compliance Real-Time PCR (qPCR) Assay” stands as a testament to the organization's commitment to fostering excellence in cellular biology research. Through a strategic blend of education, resources, and collaboration, the program has successfully empowered researchers, resulting in notable achievements and contributions to the scientific community. As we celebrate the program's

success, we look forward to continued growth and innovation in the dynamic field of Cell Cultures and MIQE compliance Real-Time PCR (qPCR) Assay.



Resource Panel:

- Prof. C.N.R.A. Alles – Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya
- Prof. D.A. Satharasinghe - Molecular and Nutritional Biochemistry Laboratory (MNBL), Biochemistry Division, Department of Basic Veterinary Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya
- Prof. W.D.S.J. Wickramasinghe – Department of Parasitology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya
- Dr. Ruwan Premathilaka – Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya
- Dr. M.G.T.M. Prasadine - Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya
- Dr. Dinesha Ambagaspitiya – Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya

Workshop on cell cultures and MIQE compliance Real –time PCR (qPCR) Assay- Participant's perspective.

By Dr. H.E.M. Kanishka Bandaranayake

The workshop was conducted for four consecutive days from 7th to 10th of Nov 2023, Organized by SLALAS in collaboration with Biochemistry department of Faculty of Medicine and Department of Basic Veterinary Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and animal Sciences, University of Peradeniya, and Sri Lanka College of Veterinary Surgeons.

This workshop consisted of physical lectures and practical sessions to get hands-on experience. It was done under main two categories, Cell culture and q-PCR assay. Under cell culture section Establishment of a cell culture laboratory was discussed along with principles of cell signaling, effect of drugs on cells, stem cell isolation, cryopreservation, preparation of primary cell culture and practical components related to it.

Under the q-PCR, Basic principles of PCR, gel electrophoresis and procedures related to q-PCR and its advantages over conventional methods were discussed with practical sessions related to each topic. All the hands-on experience was a privilege because the cost of materials for components needed for such work is tremendous and we had an opportunity to practice and see results for ourselves and have a pretty good understanding about all the procedures.

Other than these main two topics, Principles of Biosafety protection, Biosafety containment facilities and equipment were also discussed.

The inter-mix of lectures and practical sessions were planned optimally to have a gradual development of skills and knowledge without complications. The hospitality throughout the workshop was noteworthy as it made the whole experience nicer. I would like to thank the organizers and all the resource persons who contributed their valuable time and effort to make this a success.

Certificate Course in Laboratory Animal Science

By Dr. Hasanthi Rathnadiwakara

One of the major events in the SLALAS calendar, the 'Certificate Course in Laboratory Animal Science' has been successfully conducted for the year 2023. This time the course was organized in collaboration with the Animal Centre, Medical Research Institute (MRI), Colombo, and Sri Lanka College of Veterinary Surgeons (SLCVS).

The main aim of this course is to provide basic knowledge, facts, principles, and training for the humane use and care of laboratory animals in laboratory animal-based research. This time a total of 34 participants were registered and completed the coursework successfully. Participants included undergraduate students, postgraduate students, and researchers from different universities and institutes in the country. The course was divided into two sessions: a theory session and a practical session. The theory session was conducted online every Saturday from 5th August to 2nd September by a panel of experts in the field. This session covered basic theoretical knowledge a laboratory animal researcher should have to begin and continue with their animal research.



Practical sessions at MRI

Practical sessions were held at the Animal Centre, MRI. The students participated in the practical session as groups and they were trained for laboratory animal handling, sample collection, and different methods of drug administration such as oral, intramuscular, subcutaneous, and intravenous. Participants also had the chance to learn standard procedures and maintenance of the laboratory animal facility as well as laboratory animal feed production during the practical sessions.



Practical sessions at MRI





Students practice blood drawing using the simulating animal models at the Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo.

Towards the end of the course, participants also had a chance to practice blood drawing using simulating animal models.

For the first time this year the knowledge of the participants was assessed by a written examination. It was a 3 hour's paper with five short answer questions. Out of all, 27 participants sat for the exam and 21 were able to score the pass mark.

At the end of the course, all the participants had the opportunity to do group presentations on selected topics. The topics included the preparation of a research protocol on a selected topic and the critical evaluation of a published paper based on the ARRIVE guidelines.



Student presentations

All the veterinary graduates had the opportunity to receive 2 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points from SLCVS for the successful completion of the course.



Students with few of the resource persons after the end-course examination

Resource Panel of the Certificate Course:

- Prof. Mangala Gunatilake – Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo
- Dr. Sachini Amarasekara – Faculty of Science, University of Colombo
- Prof. Sugandhika Suresh – Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura
- Dr. Kalpani Ratnayake – Faculty of Health Sciences, CINEC Campus
- Dr. Gihani Jayaweera - Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, General Sir John Kotelawala Defense University
- Dr. Kavindra Wijesundara – Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya
- Dr. Mayuri Thammitiyagodage – Animal Centre, Medical Research Institute, Colombo
- Dr. Krishanthi Premarathne - Faculty of Livestock Fisheries & Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
- Dr. Tharanga Thoradeniya – Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo
- Dr. Prasadi De Silva – Faculty of Science, University of Colombo
- Dr. Dulani Samaranayake – Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo
- Prof. Preethi Udagama - Faculty of Science, University of Colombo
- Dr. Ureshani Karunarathna - Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura
- Dr. Ramani Karunakaran - Animal Centre, Medical Research Institute, Colombo



Course on
“Zebrafish as an alternative model”

Organized by the
Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS)
 in collaboration with the
Medical Research Institute (MRI),
Sri Lanka College of Veterinary Surgeons (SLCVS),
3Rs Centre in LAS in Sri Lanka &
Society for Alternatives to Animal Testing in Sri Lanka (SAAT-SL)



Online Lectures
 16th December 2023 (Saturday)
 From 8.30 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

**Workshop
 Fee
 Rs. 5000/=**



Practical Session at MRI
 17th December 2023 (Sunday)
 From 9.30 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

**Certificate will
 be issued.**

The maximum number of participants is 25.
Registration Link:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc3PdhRH64F9Qo04vUDCvefzt1IRThMcUQhISJTqzeBWDgA/viewform?usp=sf_link
Deadline for Registration: 1st December 2023

A/C Name : Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science
 A/C No. : 167-2-001-2-0007451
 Bank. : People's Bank (Town Hall Branch)

Further details : slalasci@gmail.com,



**Successfully
 Completed.**



New members

Ms. H.K. Hasini Maleesha Premantha

Research Assistant,
Department of Basic Veterinary
sciences,
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and
Animal Science,
University of Peradeniya

Ms. J. M. Nishani Jayanika Jayathilake

Graduate Research Student,
Institute for Basic Sciences,
Deajeon,
South Korea

Ms. W. Ushawarni Kushalangini

Mendis Ph.D. candidate at Faculty of
Agriculture and Life Sciences,
Lincoln University,
Canterbury - New Zealand

Ms. Prasanthi Kumari Lawrence

Research Assistant,
Dept of Botany,
Faculty of Applied Sciences, University
of Sri Jayewardenepura

Dr. Buddika Malaweera

Lecturer,
Department of Animal Science,
Faculty of Animal Science & Export
Agriculture,
Uva Wellassa University

Dr. W.A. Bhagya Wanasinghe

Veterinary Surgeon,
Siyane Pet Animal Hospital,
Naranwala

Ms. K. Hashanthi E. Fernando

Research Assistant,
International Institute of Health
Sciences,
Multiversity,
Wattala

UPCOMING EVENTS



**Pre-Conference Workshop on
Microbiological Monitoring and Genetic Monitoring
of Laboratory Animals**

Organized by the
Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS)
in collaboration with the
Medical Research Institute (MRI), Sri Lanka



**5th January 2024
(Online Lectures)**

**6th January 2024
(Onsite Practical
Session at MRI)**

Registration fee: Rs. 5000.00
Limited to 20 participants

Link for registration:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeHiv9Mw5s9x7k46Vc3L6o6x8Qqv5g0EZB217rhmgx-Is6gw/viewform?usp=sf_link

Registration Closing date: 1st January 2024

A/C Name : Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science
A/C No. : 167-2-001-2-0007451
Bank. : People's Bank (Town Hall Branch)
Further details : slalasci@gmail.com,



**Pre-Conference workshop on
Use of Laboratory Animals in Surgery: Ethics,
Techniques and Alternatives to Practice**

Organized by the
Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS)
in collaboration with the
Medical Research Institute (MRI), Sri Lanka



**11th January 2024
(Online Lectures)**

**13th January 2024
(Onsite Practical
Session at MRI)**

Registration fee: Rs. 7500.00
Limited to 20 participants

Link for registration:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdM_Ncp4m1qK3gWhRH0raFlUaEhjqPY1Pg0TPYtuKhisPAUOW/viewform?usp=sf_link

Registration Closing date: 4th January 2024

A/C Name : Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science
A/C No. : 167-2-001-2-0007451
Bank. : People's Bank (Town Hall Branch)
Further details : slalasci@gmail.com,



**Pre-Conference Workshop on
"Systematic Review and Meta-analysis"**

Organized by the
Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SLALAS)
in collaboration with
Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo
& Centre for Research Development and Innovation, University of Colombo



12th January 2024

Venue: Department of Physiology, Level 6, UCFM Tower, Faculty of
Medicine, University of Colombo, Colombo 08

Registration fee: Rs. 5000.00
Limited to 20 participants

Registration link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSenHX6yhqQBIMjrkbNffsqvNveM2Vd6vuzxolvP5zBeceNg/viewform?usp=sf_link

Registration Closing date: 4th January 2024

A/C Name : Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science
A/C No. : 167-2-001-2-0007451
Bank. : People's Bank (Town Hall Branch)
Further details : slalasci@gmail.com,

Calling Application for the JALAS International Awards

SLALAS is looking for an excellent young researcher, to be nominated as the **candidate for the Japanese Association for Laboratory Animal Science (JALAS) International Award 2023**.

This award will be presented at the **71st JALAS Annual Meeting** which is scheduled to take place in **Kyoto from May 29th (Wed) to May 31st (Fri), 2024**.

To be considered, the candidate must meet the following requirements:

- The candidate should be actively involved in laboratory animal science, covering basic to applied biomedical research using experimental animals or related topics such as technology, management, and animal welfare.
- The candidate must be 35 years old or younger as of December 31, 2023 (born after January 1, 1988).
- The candidate must present their research accomplishments in an oral presentation session at the 71st JALAS Annual Meeting in Kyoto organized by Professor Masahide Asano, Kyoto University.
- The winners should be able to visit Japan, participate in the meeting, and deliver an award presentation, followed by an award ceremony on May 30th afternoon.

We kindly request you to provide the following documents for the candidate's recommendation **by January 5th, 2024**.

(Based on the applications received the Executive Committee of SLALAS will select a suitable candidate to be recommended for the award.)

1. Duly filled application form
2. An abstract of the candidate's research
3. One-page summary of your active engagement in laboratory animal research

Please note that the awardees will receive a testimonial and a cash bursary of ¥100,000 at the JALAS annual meeting. However, JALAS will not be able to provide reimbursement for your travel expenses.

11th Annual Scientific Sessions and International Conference



11th Annual Scientific Sessions and International Conference will be held on 20th and 21st January 2024, at The Hilton Hotel, Colombo.

- Conference registration is only via pre-registration in order to confirm the headcount of the event by the 1st week of January. **Pre-registration will be closed by the 4th of January 2024**
- **No registration will be accepted after the deadline.**
- As there are a limited number of seats available now, the online registration can be confirmed on a **first come first serve basis**.
- **ONSITE REGISTRATION** is not available.

Link for registration:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd5BwUss304VAL1vbYyKVQbdJwTvmNkHZG26QAN_D2-8TEZvA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Conference registration details:

- Registration fee for members: LKR 5500.00
- Registration fee for non-members: LKR 6500.00
- Registration fee for undergraduates: LKR 4000.00
- Registration fee for foreign delegates: USD 55
- If the abstract presenting author is not a member of SLALAS, he/ she must obtain session membership of LKR 5500.00

Bank account details:

Account Name: Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science
 Account Number: 167-2-001-2-0007451
 Bank: People's Bank
 Branch: Colombo Town Hall
 Swift code: PSBKLKLX

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Dr. Sachini Amarasekara, Lecturer Centre for Immunology & Molecular Biology, Department of Zoology and Environment sciences, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
- Dr. Kalpani Ratnayake, Head of the Department/ Senior Lecturer Department of Cosmetic Science, Faculty of Health Sciences, CINEC Campus, Malabe, Sri Lanka
- Dr. Varuni Gunathilake, Senior Lecturer, Department of Zoology, Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Gangodawila, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka
- Ms. Chedliya Ishak BSc (Genetics & Biochemistry), MSc (Regenerative Medicine & Stem Cell Research), MBA (Aus), Editor/ Society for Alternatives to Animal Testing in Sri Lanka, Executive committee member/ Sri Lanka Association for Laboratory Animal Science