

COVID Pandemic mega economic meltdown and Sri Lankan dermatology

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Sri Lanka is now making a slow recovery from the COVID pandemic and subsequent mega economic meltdown. These two events triggered off a storm of catastrophic political instability, violent protests, rising inflation and a widespread feeling of uncertainty and despair.

The impact of aforementioned factors has a profound effect on every aspect of healthcare services (Dermatology too became an early casualty) of the country. Among these were, large scale immigration of skilled healthcare professionals, lack of essential drugs and equipments, allegation of widespread corruption in procurement of essentials.

Above has led to a breakdown in the maintenance of smooth functioning of both curative and prevention aspects of the Department of Health.

Further, both undergraduate and postgraduate medical training were locally affected. Newer methods of teaching like Zoom meetings, online lectures, digital based training, replaced at least to a fair extent, the standard lectures and ward/clinic based techniques. Conduct of medical examinations, both undergraduate and postgraduate became a nightmare. However, in Dermatology we managed to conduct both screening (Part I) and exist exams (MD Part II) without any postponement or major debacle. A lot of credit to the Chairman and members of the Board of Study in Dermatology for their dedicated work. For a long period, postgraduate trainees in overseas training did not receive the monthly stipend. This has forced some trainees to sit for MRCP examinations.

However, with all above obstacles, it is commendable that SLCD was able to conduct the 12th South Asian Regional Conference of Dermatology (SARCD) successfully in October 2023 though certain cost cutting measures were followed.

All forms of research conducted by our members came to a standstill due to a number of reasons. Lack of patients, lack of funds and diversion of attention to other essential aspects of life were the main contributing factors. This resulted in drying up of papers submitted to the *SLJD*. This prompted us to delay the publication of the last issue of the Journal. We, the editorial board salute our members who have submitted a number of esteemed articles at this time of crisis.

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