

An audit of research output and membership characteristics of Section A, SLAAS

R J Peiris-John*

Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Gangodawila, Nugegoda

An audit was conducted using membership records and published abstracts in the last 61 years available in the SLAAS office. For an analysis of membership characteristics and participation in activities of SLAAS section A, a questionnaire was included in the section A newsletter and the responses analysed.

Section A has contributed to the scientific sessions of SLAAS since 1947. Overall 1,287 presentations have been made at the sessions during the past 61 years. In the first 10 years, a total of 64 presentations were made. During the past 10 years, 320 presentations have been made. Of these, 264 presentations were on research conducted in Medicine and related fields, 11 in the Veterinary Sciences, 5 in the Dental Sciences and 40 in Ayurvedic Medicine and related fields.

A majority of the papers submitted on Medicine and related fields were from the University of Colombo (n=130), Peradeniya (n=52), Sri Jayewardenepura (n=35), Kelaniya (n=18) and Ruhuna (n=17) and the anti-Malarial campaign (n=18). The majority of abstracts from the University of Colombo during this period were in the sub-specialties of Parasitology (n=55), Biochemistry & Molecular biology (n=24) and Indigenous medicine (n=12). In the last 3 years, there have been no presentations from the Medical Research Institute, Dental Institutions or from the hospitals under the Ministry of health. As at end 2005, Section A has members from only 16 of the 25 districts in the country. Of the 343 members whose private addresses are available, 69% are resident in the Colombo district, 10% in the Kandy district, 7% in the Gampaha district and 5% in the Galle district.

This analysis revealed membership characteristics of highest academic excellence in both men and women. Expertise in a wide array of sub-specialties of the medical, dental and veterinary sciences is available. The decline in numbers of research papers in the recent past may be because researchers prefer to present their findings in the Associations in the different sub-specialties in Medicine, Dental and Veterinary Sciences rather than in the general research forum of SLAAS. However, the lack of representation in the membership from 9 of the districts is a matter of concern. It is important that Section A develops strategies necessary to harness the expertise to achieve the stated objectives of SLAAS.

* roshi@visual.lk

Tel: 011-2802182