



President's message

Renewing our commitment

We have entered yet another new year. New years are for new resolutions and a renewed commitment to achieve our goals. At LAF we continue our determined efforts to create a better understanding of dementia, and improve the lives of persons with dementia and their families.

We take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported us on this journey in 2022 and look forward to your enthusiastic partnership this year as well. We are confident that despite the many challenges our mission will persist with vigour and resoluteness.

We are excited about our new digital campaign in the pipeline in collaboration with NGage strategic alliance and AIA Sri Lanka. Similarly, we look forward to continuing dementia care through our state of the art activity center in Colombo. We are looking for opportunities to train caregivers in dementia care and are hopeful it will come to fruition this year. Our outreach activities in Galle will continue as in the past year.

While recent reports of breakthrough medicines for Alzheimer's may bring hope of a cure, it is still a long way from the average person with the condition. The research is still not conclusive and only robust clinical trials in persons with the disease will confirm the benefits and risks, as with all medicines. The costs at present are extremely prohibitive even in the most developed of countries and whether it will translate to an affordable cure for the millions afflicted by the condition globally, only time will tell.

In the meantime, knowledge and patient loving care are at the core of improving the lives of those who have dementia. We encourage those of you who are caregivers for your loved ones with dementia to reach out and join our zoom carer support group conducted fortnightly.

We thank all those of you who share this commitment with us and wish you a happy and fulfilled 2023.

Prof Shehan Williams
President



AN APPROVED GOVERNMENT CHARITY
(GAZETTE NOTIFICATION NO. 1225)

Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

Website: www.alz.lanka.org

Email: alzheimers@alz.lanka.org



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Free Memory Screening

2023		
Jan	-	13th 27th
Feb	-	10th 24th
Mar	-	3rd 17th

Appointments are limited.
Please call the Helpline 2667080 to register.

Volunteers Workshop - 8th December at LAF Auditorium

Welcome speech by Srma

It is with great pride, pleasure and honor that we welcome everyone present to this training, especially as we have the good fortune to have Lorraine Yu make her first appearance at the centre after a break of a little over 3 years. All that Lorraine achieved in the short span of 20 years cannot be measured by any standards and we hope that she will always be there to advice and guide us to greater heights of achievements. We also extend a heartfelt welcome to Joao – who is no stranger to the centre, as he is another person who has willingly made his warm contribution to Lorraine and thereby to LAF.

I thank the Monday group volunteers for organizing and executing this training program on the art of increasing the value that we volunteers extend to the clients who have become a part of our family.

May LAF go from strength to strength at this moment in time. We gather all that Lorraine has sown. May future generations continue to benefit from what we are trying to sow. THANK YOU



Vote of thanks by Nadira

On behalf of the volunteer groups at the Lanka Alzheimers Foundation, we are indeed fortunate to have someone like Lorraine with her extensive experience of care, imparting her knowledge on the role of the volunteer. I am sure all of you gained a lot of insight from what she has said today. Thank you, Lorraine for always being there: this centre, as we all know, would not be here today if not for your untiring efforts to make a dream of yours come to fruition. I want to extend our thanks to all you, for your time, not just today, but for this centre always. Joao - we are ever so grateful to you for taking time off your holiday to spend time with us at the centre, giving us more insight into dealing and identifying behaviour changes and how to cope with them. I thank Dr Shehan for always providing opportunities for such workshops and for your leadership in steering this ship through the right channels. Last but not least, my sincere appreciation to all the Monday volunteers for your time, support, and caring in helping to make the lives brighter and better for all those come here. You are all rock stars. Thank you once again to all of you for the yesterdays, today, and the tomorrows.

CALL OUR HELP LINE

2667080

Monday to Friday | 9am– 5pm

For information on dementia and dementia care management

The Annual Christmas Party

The Annual Christmas Party was held once again on 2nd December 2022 after a hiatus of 2 years. The country was in lock down due to COVID last year, LAF decided that clients should not be exposed to larger gatherings as a precautionary measure and to hold celebrations on the Activity Centre day of clients in the morning, without family members being present. Given this background, LAF was delighted to be able to have clients and family back at LAF together in the evening for this years' celebrations.

For weeks, clients helped decorate the tree, made banners and other decor to give that all important festive feel to LAF. They practised carols and made cards for their loved ones.

At the party, the clients quickly lost any inhibitions they may have had and enjoyed themselves thoroughly. The carols, followed by the arrival of Santa Claus distributing gifts, no doubt brought back fond memories of yesteryear. The evening ended with a wide variety of refreshments donated by well-wishers and a time of good fellowship. The smiles on the faces of the clients and the oft voiced acknowledgement of having had a good time, was very gratifying.



Physical and mental exercise

Physical and mental exercise delays onset of Alzheimers and prevents condition deteriorating - President, Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation of Sri Lanka, Prof. Shehan Williams (Sunday Observer 18/9/2022)

Diagnostic and treatment facilities available in all hospitals

Q: Could you explain what Alzheimer's disease is in simple layman language?

A. Alzheimer's disease is a condition in which the brain starts to lose its cells more rapidly than usual resulting in the person having difficulty in thinking and remembering.

Q: Is AD the same as Dementia which is also a memory loss related condition?

A. Dementia is an umbrella term that denotes cognitive decline in a person i.e a person losing their ability to think, remember and act. Dementia can be due to many conditions or reasons. These include brain injury due to trauma strokes, bleeding into the brain, tumours or excessive collection of brain fluid known as cerebrospinal fluid. Others include certain infections that affect the brain like HIV, syphilis, tuberculosis and vitamin deficiencies, excessive alcohol use and genetic diseases like Huntington's disease.

Q: What are the most common and significant causes of dementia?

A. Primarily, it is Alzheimer's disease. Other well-known causes are vascular dementia and Parkinson's related dementia.

Q: Who are the most vulnerable groups, in terms of age and gender, for dementia?

A. Age is the biggest risk factor to develop this condition. Our risk of getting this condition increases with age. If we live till the age of 90, one in three of us will develop this condition. Unfortunately, more women are affected by this condition than men. No one knows the exact reasons behind this although some suggest it may be due to hormonal changes that occur following menopause.

Q: Is Depression related to dementia?

A. People with depression can present with forgetfulness and impaired ability to think and act. This condition is called 'depressive pseudo-dementia' and should not be mistaken as dementia. This is why a proper evaluation is necessary. These persons will recover when the underlying depression is treated. Sometimes though, depression can also be an early sign of subsequent dementia.

Q: Are alcohol and smoking contributory causes?

A. The harm to the brain in those who drink **excess quantities of alcohol** is immeasurable as recent studies have proved. Alcohol related dementia is a well-recognised entity affecting those who take alcohol.

Smoking is perhaps the greatest risk factor for dementia. It contributes to both Alzheimer's and Vascular dementia and smokers are at 50 percent higher risk of getting dementia. Smoking is a contributory cause for many non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, strokes and even dementia. It causes atherosclerosis in blood vessels leading to impaired blood supply to the brain. It is a definite contributor to vascular dementia and Alzheimer's disease

- **These are the two predominant causes of dementia and should be avoided completely.**

For more information, please click on the link below:

<http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2022/09/18/health/physical-and-mental-exercise-delays-onset-alzheimer's-prevents-condition>

Does Hormone Replacement Therapy Increase Women's Risk of Dementia?

Women have a higher risk of developing dementia, particularly Alzheimer dementia (AD). The reason for a sex difference in the risk of AD is not clearly understood. Some researchers suspect that hormone changes that come with menopause may be associated with a higher risk of dementia. If so, it would be expected that replacing hormones in menopause might reduce dementia risk for women. However, the relationship between hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and dementia risk is much more complex.

Previous studies on this topic have reached different conclusions about whether HRT increases or decreases the risk of AD. For example, the Women's Health Initiative Memory Study (WHIMS) suggested increased risk of AD with HRT. Other studies such as the Multi-Institutional Research in Alzheimer's Genetic Epidemiology (MIRAGE) study showed that HRT in younger women (that is, aged 50–63 years) was associated with reduced risk of AD.^{1,2} These differing results make it difficult for doctors to give good advice about the effects of HRT to women experiencing menopause. To better understand the relationship between HRT and AD risk, the researchers in this study analyzed data from a large number of women over many years.

What Did This Study Find?

This study found that women on HRT have a significantly increased risk of all types of dementia, including Alzheimer disease, vascular dementia, and other types of dementia. Risks of Alzheimer disease and vascular dementia were significantly higher in the HRT group, regardless of the age when menopause began. Higher doses of HRT were associated with higher dementia risk. However, the duration of hormone use, either 13.5 years or less vs 13.5 years or more, did not seem to affect the risk.

Source : Patient page of Neurology – a highly reputed scientific journal. First published on 24 October 2022

Grand Sale held at LAF - 19th November 2022



The Grand Sale was a great success.

Special thanks to Saroj Amalean for her untiring efforts in organizing it.

We also thank all those of you who participated

Appreciation - Ren Lan Mather



We greatly appreciate your commitment and service to LAF over the years.

THANK YOU REN LAN !!



Awareness Program - 11th November 2022

An Awareness program for Sri Lanka Association of Senior Citizens was held on 11th November 2022 at the St Paul's Church Hall, Milagiriya.

The program was conducted by Dr Ruminda Herat Gunaratne.

Ms Padmini Fernando – President, of the Sri Lanka Association of Senior Citizens, thanked the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation and Dr Ruminda for conducting this program at very short notice. There were 40 participants in the age group of 60 to 80 years.



From a Student Volunteer's perspective



I'm Sandeepa Baddegama and I'm 17 years old. I joined the Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation as a student volunteer, from June to December 2022. After finishing my O/L's I wanted to put my time to better use, and that's how I ended up volunteering here. The time I spent at LAF was unforgettable as I learnt to help people who are living with dementia. Before joining as a student volunteer, I knew about the disease Dementia because of my aunt. I knew it was a disease where patients lost their memory. But I didn't know about any other symptoms. However, after I joined as a student volunteer, I got to know more information about this disease.

On my first day at LAF, the office manager warmly welcomed me and introduced me to the volunteers and also to the clients. All the volunteers helped me to adopt to the environment and get familiar with the clients. They were all friendly. I enjoyed the time I spent with those volunteers and clients. I came to the center on Wednesdays and Fridays, so I was there on two days of the week with clients.

As the center starts at 9 a.m. volunteers come before 9. After the clients come, they have their tea and biscuits. Then they do some activities like drawing, painting, handwork and craft. Volunteers help them. Most of the clients like to cut and paste things. They are very creative in their own way. The next part of the day is everybody's favorite time- the singing session. All the clients enjoy this. They love to sing along with the piano and some like to dance because it is enjoyable for them.

There are many lessons that we can take from their lives. Most of them can't remember their past and many of them don't worry about their future. All of them live in the present and try to enjoy that moment to the fullest. That was a great lesson I learnt from their lives.

After the singing session they have lunch. The lunch is vegetarian. After lunch they watch television for some time and they talk to each other. Then all of us play some games like snakes and ladders, puzzles and some board games. It is fun because all of them do it together. At 3 p.m. their family members come to pick them up. The volunteers leave only after all the clients leave the center. I really enjoyed spending my time with them and it was a great experience. I learnt many things about dementia and saw the way they respond to other people. I think volunteering here is a great opportunity because I got a lot of experience on how to interact with different people and become a mature teenager, able to deal responsibly in society. The time I spent at Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation has been one of the most favorite times in my life.

**Questions about
dementia ?**

2667080

Monday to Friday | 9am– 5pm

For information on dementia and dementia care management

DATES TO REMEMBER

EVENTS CALENDER 2023

February

25th February - Scrabble Bash

(All participants are required to be fully vaccinated. A face mask is mandatory)

September

2nd - September - Run to Remember **(TBC)**

21st September - World Alzheimer's Day

23rd - September - Annual Memory Walk **(TBC)**

November

18th - November - Grand Sale **(TBC)**

December

8th December - Christmas Party

(Please get in touch with us on 2667082/4 if you would like to take part or contribute to any of the above events)

W₁, E₁, L₁, C₃, O₁, M₃, E₁

SCRABBLE BASH

2023

Venue

Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation
110, Ketawalamulla Lane, Colombo 10

Date

Saturday, 25th February

Time

9 am to 4 pm

Sponsorship

Individual - Rs. 2,500/-
Team of 4 - Rs. 10,000/-

Call 2667080/82/84 for more information



Visit of University of Kelaniya Final Year Students

LAF welcomed 35 final year medical students from the University of Kelaniya on 4th January 2023 .

Due to the COVID pandemic students were unable to visit LAF for nearly 3 years.

We now look forward to regular visits from students, this year.



A patient with cognitive impairment who wanders outside alone can easily become confused, injured and get lost.

An identification bracelet can help a loved one with dementia to get back home safely.



Hypoallergenic and Tamperproof ID bracelets are now available at

The Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation

Inquiries Call 0112667080 /82

Current Services

- Raising awareness and eradicating stigma
- Education on risk reduction
- Education on care management
- Helpline +94 11 2667080
- Memory screening / assessments done twice a month on Fridays
- Activity Centre
- Quarterly newsletter
- Resource Centre/ Information and resource materials
- Caregiver support group (CSG) meeting
- Memory Garden Cafe
- Identification bracelet
- Website : www.alzlanka.org
- www.facebook.com/alzlanka

Caregiver Support Group (CSG)

These meetings are conducted now monthly online every 1st & 3rd Tuesdays from 7.30pm - 8.30pm

- support caregivers through discussion and sharing
- listen and learn from care experiences
- share common concerns

Collaboration :

- Sensitise medical students of the Kelaniya University & the Kotelawala Defence University on non-pharmacological approaches to Dementia.
- Practical training for students of the speech therapy unit of the Kelaniya University.

The Board

Lakmali Cabral (Secretary), Priya Fernando, Lilani Jayasuriya, (Treasurer)
Beverley Mirando, Romany Parakrama, Nimal Gunewardena , Prof. Shehan Williams (President)

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE FOUNDATION
BY MAKING A DONATION OR LEAVING A LEGACY**

The Foundation is a Government Approved Charity (Gazette Notification no. 1225)

Cheques should be crossed and made payable to the **Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation** and sent to Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation, 110 Ketawalamulla Lane, Colombo 10, Sri Lanka

Monthly/Annual donation can be made directly to

Account number: 106110117418

Swift Code NDBSLKLX ,

National Development Bank PLC , Havelock Town Branch, (formerly Jawatte Branch)

117, Havelock Road, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The Lanka Alzheimer's Foundation is a community based charity and relies on donations in order to sustain the services provided to persons with dementia and their family carers.

Your support makes a difference - please give generously