

# CAPAGE NEWSLETTER

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*Promoting Academic and Professional Excellence in Health Care to Meet  
the Challenges of Aging in Sri Lanka*

## CAPAGE Project | 3<sup>rd</sup> Management Meeting

The **3rd Management Meeting** of the *Capacity for Active Ageing (CAPAGE)* project was held on **February 17, 2025**, at the **Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo**.

The meeting commenced at 9:30 AM at the Multi-Purpose Hall, UCFM Tower, with an in-depth discussion on optimization within the CAPAGE consortium. This session focused on enhancing collaboration, streamlining project activities, and ensuring effective resource utilization across partner institutions.



CAPAGE project members at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Following this, Prof. Monica Christova delivered a progress report, providing valuable insights into the milestones achieved so far under the CAPAGE project. She highlighted advancements in curriculum development, research collaborations, and the implementation of geriatric assessment initiatives.

The meeting then progressed to work package (WP) updates:

✅ **WP 3 update and plans:** CAPAGE members from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, discussed the plan to complete the WP3 activities.

✅ **WP 4 update:** Leaders from JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland, and the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, presented a brief status update and outlined the future action plan for geriatric curriculum development.

✅ **WP 5 plans:** During this session, CAPAGE members from General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka, and University of A Coruña, Spain leaders from WP4 presented the action plan with deadlines for e-course development for healthcare professionals.

✅ **WP 7 updates and plans:** CAPAGE members of the University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka, and Eastern University of Sri Lanka leaders shared updates and plans for dissemination and communication plans of the project.

The management meeting reaffirmed CAPAGE's commitment to fostering academic and professional excellence in healthy aging. The discussions laid a strong foundation for future initiatives, including the implementation of new geriatric competency frameworks, enhanced research collaborations, and the establishment of active aging information centers.

The successful completion of the 3rd Management Meeting marks another milestone in the CAPAGE project's journey toward transforming geriatric care education and practice in Sri Lanka and beyond.



**Dr. Asha Wettasinghe, Project Manager, UoC, delivering the welcome address**



**Prof. Vajira HW Dissanayake, Dean, Faculty of Medicine University of Colombo addressing the CAPAGE project members**



**Dr. Monica Christova, CAPAGE Project Coordinator, delivering the progress report**



**WP leaders presenting the updates and future plans**

## Policy Dialogue on Healthy Ageing: “Global Perspectives on Geriatric Care: Lessons for Policy and Practice”

The Centre for Health Systems Policy and Innovation (CHSPI) at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, successfully hosted the Policy Dialogue on Healthy Ageing: “Global Perspectives on Geriatric Care: Lessons for Policy and Practice” on February 17, 2025. This pivotal event was a part of the Capacity for Active Ageing (CAPAGE) project under the ERASMUS initiative, aimed at enhancing academic and professional excellence in healthcare to address the growing challenges of aging in Sri Lanka.

With the global population aging rapidly, expected to double by 2050, making up 22% of the world's population, ensuring the well-being of older adults has become a pressing concern. The dialogue brought together CAPAGE members, local and international experts, policymakers, and healthcare professionals to discuss innovative approaches to geriatric care and policy development.

### Key Highlights of the Event

The session commenced with a welcome address by Prof. Vajira Dissanayake, Director of CHSPI, who underscored the CAPAGE project's role in fostering global collaboration in geriatric care. This was followed by a presentation on the objectives of CAPAGE by Dr. Monica Christova from Austria, Coordinator of the CAPAGE project, emphasizing the importance of enriching physiotherapy and nursing curricula with innovative geriatric content.

An insightful session on the European Geriatric Care Model was presented by Dr. Kristina Grahn from JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland, showcasing successful elderly care models that could serve as blueprints for Sri Lanka. This presentation covered elderly care models implemented in various European countries, including Finland, Austria, Spain, and Portugal.

Bringing a local perspective, Dr. Sithira Senevirathne, Consultant Geriatrician from National Hospital of Sri Lanka, addressed the challenges and needs within Sri Lanka's geriatric care model, highlighting gaps in infrastructure, training, and policy support.

Another crucial aspect discussed was the Geriatric Competency Framework for Nurses and Physiotherapists in Sri Lanka, presented by Prof. Duarte Pereira from Santa Maria Health School, Portugal. His talk emphasized the necessity of standardized competency training to enhance healthcare providers' capacity in delivering geriatric care.

### Shaping the Future of Geriatric Care in Sri Lanka

The policy dialogue culminated in a facilitated discussion moderated by Prof. Vajira Dissanayake, where participants explored available resources, competency development, and policy frameworks for improving elderly care services in Sri Lanka.

## Key Outcomes of the Policy Dialogue

- ✓ Insights into global models of geriatric care and their relevance to Sri Lanka.
- ✓ Identification of gaps and challenges in Sri Lanka's healthcare system for the elderly.
- ✓ Recommendations for competency development, resource allocation, and policy reforms in geriatric care.
- ✓ Strengthening of global-local collaborations to advance healthy aging initiatives.

The Policy Dialogue on Healthy Ageing reinforced the urgent need for systematic policy reforms and interdisciplinary collaboration to ensure quality care for Sri Lanka's aging population.



**Prof. Vajira HW Dissanayake, Dean,  
Faculty of Medicine University of  
Colombo welcoming the gathering**



**Dr. Monica Christova, CAPAGE project  
manager, introducing the CAPAGE  
project**



**Dr. Kristina Grahn presenting  
European Geriatric Care Models**



**Prof. Duarte Pereira presenting the Geriatric  
Competency Framework for Nurses and  
Physiotherapists in Sri Lanka**



**Dr. Sithira Seneviratne presenting the  
challenges and needs within Sri Lanka's  
geriatric care model**



**Participants of the Policy Dialogue**

## International Conference on Frailty and Geriatric Assessments 2025

The Faculty of Medicine at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, recently hosted the International Conference on Frailty and Geriatric Assessments on February 18th and 19th, 2025. This significant event, organized by the Department of Allied Health Sciences, was a key component of the ERASMUS project "Capacity for Active Ageing (CAPAGE)." The project aims to promote academic and professional excellence in healthcare to address the challenges of aging in Sri Lanka, in collaboration with European and Sri Lankan universities, and is co-funded by the European Union.

Under the theme "Promoting Healthy Aging through Holistic Approaches and Innovations," the conference convened diverse healthcare professionals, including physiotherapists, nurses, medical doctors, psychologists, rehabilitation experts, and allied health specialists. The primary objective was to foster collaboration, share insights, and explore innovative strategies to enhance the quality of care for aging populations worldwide.

The two-day event featured a series of symposia and plenaries focusing on the latest advancements in frailty assessment, geriatric care, and holistic approaches to promote healthy aging. Participants engaged in discussions on cutting-edge research, best practices, and policy developments aimed at improving the well-being of the elderly.

A highlight of the conference was the keynote address by a renowned geriatrician from a leading European university, who emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in addressing the complexities of aging. Additionally, several collaborative research initiatives were launched, aiming to develop innovative solutions tailored to the unique challenges faced by the elderly population in Sri Lanka and similar contexts.

The success of the International Conference on Frailty and Geriatric Assessments underscores the University of Colombo's commitment to advancing geriatric healthcare and its dedication to fostering international partnerships that drive meaningful change in the field of aging.

For more information on the conference and future initiatives, please visit the official CAPAGE Conference 2025 website '<https://med.cmb.ac.lk/capage2025/>'.

As part of the conference, a pre-conference workshop titled "Robotic Rehabilitation in Geriatric Physiotherapy" was successfully held on February 13, 2025, at the Geriatric Assessment Laboratory, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. Led by Francesco Di Nardo from Tyromotion, Austria, the session brought together final-year physiotherapy students and academic staff from the University of Colombo and General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University for an engaging and insightful experience. More than 50 participants attended the workshop.

Here are some highlights from the conference proceedings, captured in the images below.



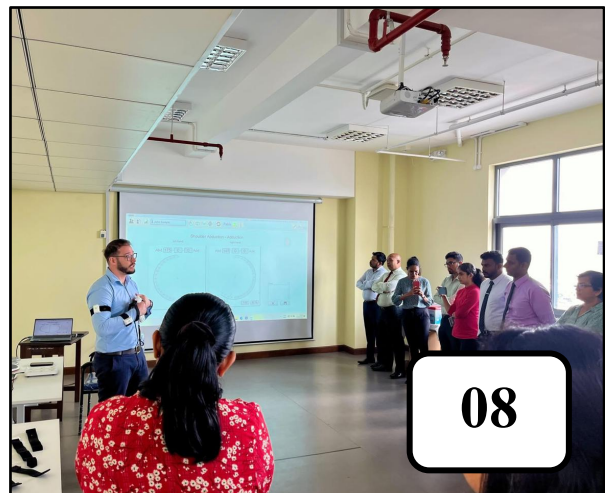




## Pre-congress Workshop on Robotic Rehabilitation in Geriatric Physiotherapy

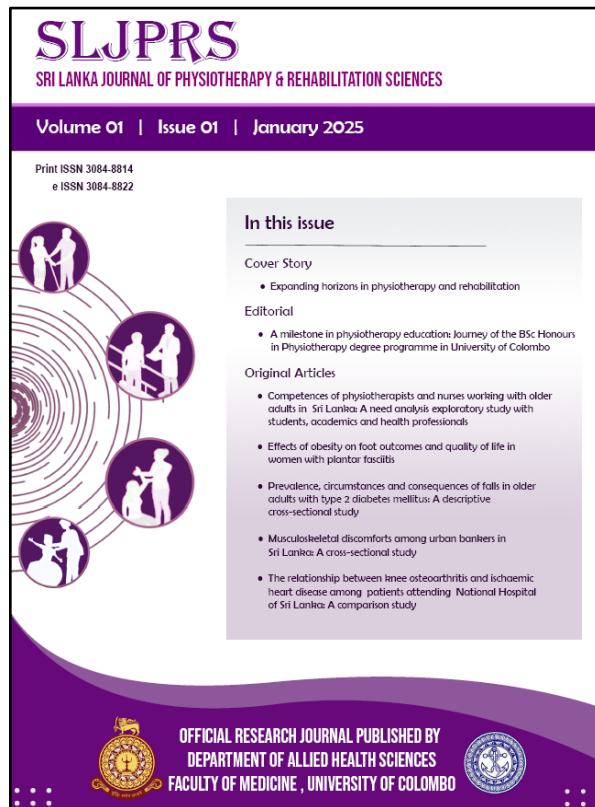
The workshop was successfully conducted at the Geriatric Assessment Laboratory, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, on February 13, 2025. It was led by Francesco Di Nardo from Tyromotion, Austria.

Sixty participants, including final-year physiotherapy students and academic staff from the University of Colombo and General Sir John Kotelawala Defense University, took part in the workshop.



# First Journal Article of the CAPAGE Project

The first journal article of the CAPAGE project was published in the inaugural issue of the Sri Lanka Journal of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Sciences. The article titled “Competences of physiotherapists and nurses working with older adults in Sri Lanka: A need analysis exploratory study with students, academics and health professionals” was based on activities conducted under Work Package 2.



## Original Research



### Competences of physiotherapists and nurses working with older adults in Sri Lanka: a need analysis exploratory study with students, academics and health professionals

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# CAPAGE Photography Competition – 2025

The CAPAGE Photography Competition was organized by the Physiotherapy Students' Welfare Society, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, in conjunction with International Conference on Frailty and Geriatric Assessments 2025. The competition featured two themes:

- Topic A: Geriatric Culture of Sri Lanka
- Topic B: The Timeless Beauty of Sri Lanka

The competition received over 150 photo submissions from a diverse range of photographers, including students from the University of Colombo, University of Peradeniya, University of Jaffna, Sri Palee Campus, and University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Additionally, healthcare professionals, school students, and freelance photographers also submitted their photographs for the competition.

The event took place on February 18, 2025, at the exhibition area, Ground level, UCFM Tower, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. To engage the audience, the organizers provided an opportunity for viewers to vote for the best photos under each category.

Mr. Aruna Sampath from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura won first place in both categories, securing top recognition for his outstanding photography.



**CAPAGE Photography Competition | 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025**



CAPAGE Photography Competition | Winners

## Planting Campaign | Green Activity | Faculty of Medicine | University of Colombo

The Plant Campaign: Green Activity was organized by the Physiotherapy Students' Welfare Society in collaboration with International Conference on Frailty and Geriatric Assessments 2025. The event aimed to promote environmental sustainability and enhance green spaces within the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo.

The activity was graced by Professor Vajira H.W. Dissanayake, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, along with European CAPAGE members and physiotherapy students. Participants actively contributed to planting greenery, fostering a healthier and more eco-friendly environment.

The event took place on Level 10 and Level 11 of the UCFM Tower, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, creating a lasting impact on the institution's commitment to sustainability.





## Physiotherapy Students Meeting with European CAPAGE members

Physiotherapy students of the University of Colombo had the invaluable opportunity to connect with European CAPAGE members at Level 10 of the UCFM Tower, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. This interactive session facilitated insightful discussions, knowledge exchange, and collaborative engagement, fostering international partnerships and enhancing the students' exposure to global advancements in physiotherapy.



## Acknowledgement

- All the CAPAGE project members for their valued participation and contribution
- European Union for co-funding the events
- Audio-visual Unit, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo
- Physiotherapy Students Welfare Society, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo
- Participants of the CAPAGE Photography Competition
- All those who captured images included in the newsletter



## Compiled by:

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