

## ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE RESEARCH WITH PATIENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT (PPIE)

Virtual Pre-Conference Workshop Conducted by the Institute for Research and  
Development in Health and Social Care (IRD) in collaboration with General Sir John  
Kotelawala Defence University (KDU)

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This virtual pre conference was organized by the Institute for Research and Development in Health and Social Care (IRD) together with General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. It is part of an ongoing project conduct by IRD in collaboration with Keele University, Kings College London, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka and funded by the Medical Research Council UK, to address the importance in “Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement” (PPIE). This report contains a summary of the pre-conference held on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2021 from 2.00 pm onwards via online Zoom platform.

In order to advance towards the quality of research with respect to “Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement” within Sri Lanka, several conferences, training sessions were carried out by the IRD continuously with Prof. Athula Sumathipala's guidance. Overall objective of the pre-conference was to address the importance, and to share the expert knowledge to enhance the views and attribution towards PPIE, in addition to encouraging application of existing PPIE techniques in practice and to involve interest in further research.

The pre-conference was initiated with the welcome address delivered by Dr. Faiz Marikar (Staff Development Centre, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University) and was conveyed with his guidance. Dr. Harinda Vidanage (Senior Lecturer Department of Defense and Strategic Studies (DSS) of FDSS/KDU) gave a brief introduction about KDU IRC 2021 “Security, Stability and National Development in the New Normal”, and stated the fact that it is the first complete virtual pre conference held by KDU under IRC 2021. Furthermore, Dr Harindra Vidanage expressed his insights and opinions on the new normal challenges and opportunities amid pandemic and handed over to Dr Faiz Marikar to continue with the conference.

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Dr Faiz Marrikar then invited Prof. Athula Sumathipala with a brief introduction about his achievements and dedication towards PPIE. Prof Athula Sumathipala initiated the session highlighting the importance and cruciality of PPIE and the need to attend and extend the current research strategies towards enhancement of PPIE. More towards the session Prof. Sumathipala pinpointed the gaps and the Sri Lankan stand which required a steady involvement in PPIE and also shared experience and knowledge profoundly.

Dr. Steven Blackburn (Research Fellow in PPIE at the School of Medicine, Keele University, UK) continued the session with a detailed and engaging presentation with valuable cognizance under the topic “The value of PPIE in the ethical design of research”. Dr. Blackburn thoroughly explained ethical approach and signified the importance of principles Involving right people, involving enough people and described how it will aid to retain ethical research conduct. Dr Blackburn also stressed the need to distance from tick box exercises and evolve with novel research.

Following Dr Blackburn, Dr. Enoka Wickremasinghe (Consultant Community Physician, Estate & Urban Health Unit, Ministry of Health) took over the session addressing the topic with a valuable presentation “PPIE in Health and Social Care Research”. Dr. Wickremasinghe explained what is PPIE, the incorporation of PPIE to research cycle, manner of involving and engaging patients and public and, the current operation in Sri Lanka with respect to PPIE. Dr. Wickremasinghe concluded the session noticeably conveying the significance of PPIE and research with evidence and experience which was a great attribution towards the pre-conference participants.

Dr Duminda Guruge (Senior Lecturer, Department of Health Promotion, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka) added to the session under the topic “Sri Lankan experiences in PPIE in Health promotion”. Dr. Guruge elaborated on the involvement and engagement in the research process and stated how the projects and research are carried out beyond public and patient involvement by taking initiative as leaders to mediate and incorporate knowledge and experience. Dr Guruge explained the assessing methods and the methodologies used adhering to Covid regulation given the current pandemic situation. Further down the session Dr Guruge shared recorded PPIE experiences which are action

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oriented with a face-to-face approach and shared the knowledge gathered which was a value added to the pre-conference. Dr Guruge highlighted the importance of involving lay people and natural leaders from communities in order to carry out scientific research and the session was successful as well as practically important for all the participants.

Mr Lasith Dissanayake (Research Associate, Institute for Research and Development in Health and Social Care) carried out the final session for the day with Dr Faiza Marikka invitation. Mr Dissanayake as an experienced research associate of IRD took the time to explain the current initiatives and continuous involvement through IRD under the topic “Role of PPIE in Research Conducted by IRD”. Specifically, about the “Adolescent depression and substance use in Vavuniya District”, “Colombo twin and singleton study - Development Project (CoTaSS 3)” and “MRC Global Health Nutrition: Enhancing Training in Sri Lanka (CoTaSS 3). Moreover, Mr Dissanayake spoke about the importance of sharing informative videos while carrying out PPIE related research to make it more informative to participants from the public.

After completing all the sessions, the Q&E was moderated by Prof. Sumathipala. There weren't questions presented and therefore, Dr Faiz Marikar invited Dr Kalpani Abhayasinghe (Senior Lecturer, Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University) for the vote of thanks. The Pre-Conference adjourned successfully with more than 75 participants and the participants were awarded with participation certificates.