
MEETING REPORT

Topics from Tropics: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Tropical Dermatology (ICTD 2026), Colombo, Sri Lanka, 11–14 March 2026

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Abstract

The Second International Conference on Tropical Dermatology (ICTD 2026) was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 11–14 March 2026 as a joint academic initiative of the Sri Lanka College of Dermatology and Aesthetic Medicine and the German Dermatological Society. Conducted under the theme “Topics from Tropics”, the conference brought together dermatologists, researchers, and trainees from around the world to discuss contemporary developments in tropical dermatology. The programme included pre-congress workshops, plenary lectures, symposia, free paper presentations, and e-poster sessions addressing infections and infestations, pigmentary disorders, environmental dermatoses, and advances in diagnostics and therapeutics.

A total of 420 delegates participated, including 297 international attendees, with contributions from 44 international experts and several regional speakers. The conference provided a platform for scientific exchange, collaborative networking, and the promotion of research related to tropical dermatoses. The successful event significantly strengthened international collaborations, secured a global trademark for Sri Lanka in connection with the conference, and laid a strong foundation for the upcoming 3rd ICTD planned for 2030. Cultural events like the “Sri Lankan Night” further enhanced the experience, leaving a lasting impression of local hospitality on the global dermatology community. This report summarizes the key highlights and academic activities of ICTD 2026.

Keywords: tropical dermatology; international conference; ICTD 2026; dermatology education; Sri Lanka

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The Second International Conference on Tropical Dermatology (ICTD 2026) was successfully held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 11-14 March 2026 as a joint academic event organized by the Sri Lanka College of Dermatology and Aesthetic Medicine (SLCDA) and German Dermatological Society (DDG) under the comprehensive theme “Topics from Tropics”. The event, conducted with remarkable success, brought together distinguished experts and participants from around the world, marking a significant milestone in the field of tropical dermatology and strengthening international collaboration.

Tropical dermatoses encompass a wide spectrum of dermatological conditions that are distinctive in their environmental and biological determinants, predominantly affecting populations in tropical and subtropical regions, where nearly 40% of the world’s population resides. The economic, social, and cultural contexts in these regions further contribute to considerable variation in disease patterns and prevalence, underscoring the unique challenges faced in the diagnosis, management, and prevention of skin diseases in the tropics.

The ICTD is primarily dedicated to advancing knowledge on tropical dermatoses, with the aim of fostering the exchange of expertise among dermatologists worldwide and creating avenues for research, novel therapeutics, and improved patient care. The concept of ICTD was first envisioned by Professor Prasad Kumarasingha, a past president of the Sri Lanka College of Dermatologists (SLCD), the forerunner of the Sri Lanka College of Dermatology and Aesthetic Medicine (SLCDA). Inspired by this vision, the SLCD took the initiative to organize the inaugural ICTD in Colombo in 2016, which was held with great success.

Although the SLCD planned to hold the subsequent International Conference on Tropical Dermatology in 2020, these plans could not be realized due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. A decade later, the 2nd ICTD was successfully organized by the Sri Lanka College of Dermatology and Aesthetic Medicine in collaboration with the German Dermatological Society (DDG).

The pre-congress session on aesthetics, one of the most dynamic and rapidly evolving areas in tropical countries, was held on 11th March 2026. This was followed by a dermoscopy workshop conducted by

world-renowned experts. In addition, a workshop on the implementation of the World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution on “Skin diseases as a global public health priority” was held with the participation of numerous stakeholders, led by Dr. Claire Fuller, Chair of the International Foundation for Dermatology.

The inauguration ceremony was held on the evening of 11th March, with Dr. Claire Fuller as the Chief Guest. Prof. Prasad Kumarasinghe graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour. The event was well-attended by members of the SLCDA, along with numerous distinguished guests from other specialties and international delegates. The ceremony concluded with a vibrant cultural programme showcasing traditional Sri Lankan dance and music, which was highly appreciated by the foreign participants.

Scientific programme and participation

The conference was attended by a total of 420 delegates, including 297 international participants and 123 local delegates. Forty-four world-renowned experts in tropical dermatology, along with sixteen Sri Lankan speakers, delivered lectures during the main conference. In addition, eight speakers from India conducted two sister society sessions in parallel with the main programme.

In keeping with the conference theme, these sessions covered a wide range of topics, including infections and infestations in the tropics, pigmentary disorders, and environmental and occupational dermatoses. The programme spanned from basic science to clinical research, and from diagnostics to therapeutics, encompassing both medical and cosmetic aspects. This provided an excellent platform to bring together clinicians with an interest in tropical disorders and scientists engaged in research on tropical dermatoses, fostering meaningful exchange and collaboration.

A total of 105 free papers and 129 e-posters, comprising original research and case studies, were presented, providing ample opportunities for young participants to showcase their work and share their experiences.

Ten SLCDA full scholarships and ten South Asian Regional Association of Dermatologists (SARAD) full scholarships were awarded to trainees and young dermatologists in recognition of their outstanding research. In addition, several partial scholarships

were granted to support attendance at the conference. These initiatives were aimed at encouraging greater engagement in both clinical and basic research in the field of tropical dermatology.

The Sri Lankan Night, held on the evening of 12th March 2026 at Cinnamon Grand Colombo, added further vibrance to ICTD 2026. The event provided an opportunity for international delegates to experience the rich and unique culture of Sri Lanka, while enjoying authentic local cuisine and interacting with conference delegates. It was a truly memorable evening of entertainment for all participants and was highly praised by nearly all foreign delegates.

Post-congress clinical case demonstrations with live patients were arranged at the National Hospital of Sri Lanka on 14th March 2026, and at the Colombo South Teaching Hospital for German delegates on 16th March 2026. Both sessions were well attended. These demonstrations provided a valuable opportunity for international delegates to observe patients with conditions such as leprosy, cutaneous leishmaniasis, cutaneous tuberculosis, as well as subcutaneous and deep fungal infections and other tropical dermatoses.

We are confident that ICTD 2026 provided an exceptional opportunity for SLCDA members to initiate collaborative work with leading experts in tropical dermatoses and to strengthen networks with international colleagues. The conference also paved the way for Sri Lanka to gain recognition as an excellent venue within the global dermatology community. Furthermore, ICTD 2026 successfully secured a trademark for Sri Lanka in connection with the Tropical Dermatology Conference, marking an important milestone in establishing the country's identity in this specialized field.

We gratefully acknowledge the positive comments and congratulatory email communications received from around the world, which commend high standards of organization and warm hospitality. These messages reflect the collective effort and unwavering dedication of the organizing committee, whose enthusiasm and commitment ensured the success of the 2nd International Conference on Tropical Dermatology. Furthermore, SLCDA looks forward to successfully organizing the 3rd ICTD in 2030, with increased international participation, building on the experience and lessons learnt from ICTD 2026.