

WONCA SOUTH ASIA REGION

NEWSLETTER

January – June 2026

Connecting Family Physicians • Strengthening Primary Care • Advancing Health Across South Asia

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Shaping the Future of South Asian Family Medicine



Dr. Pramendra Prasad Gupta
President
WONCA South Asia Region

Dear Colleagues and Champions of Family Medicine across South Asia,

It is with great pride and optimism that I welcome you to the inaugural edition of our regional newsletter. This publication marks an important milestone in our collective journey as family doctors, creating a platform to share knowledge, celebrate achievements, strengthen collaboration, and amplify the voice of primary care across our region.

We launch this newsletter at a pivotal moment for global health. Health systems worldwide continue to face unprecedented challenges—rising disease burdens, health inequities, workforce shortages, climate-related health threats, and rapidly evolving technologies. Amid these complexities, family doctors remain the foundation of resilient, accessible, and people-centered healthcare systems.

The Reality of Family Medicine in South Asia: A Stark Dichotomy

To look forward, we must be honest about where we stand. On one hand, telemedicine, AI, and digital health networks are rapidly expanding. On the other, Family Medicine still fights for recognition in many parts of South Asia. Our systems remain fragmented, commercialized, and specialist driven. Primary care is underfunded, and many medical students graduate without rotating through a dedicated General Practice department.

The Way Forward: High-Tech, High-Touch Healthcare

We cannot fix 21st-century challenges with 20th-century paradigms. Technology must be the enabler, not the replacer—stripping away administrative burdens so we can look patients in the eye. Digital health can democratize care to remote corners of our nations. We must also advocate for robust General Practice curricula at the undergraduate (MBBS) level.

A Direct Directive to Our Member Organizations

This is our moment to lead, not follow. I call on every member organization to:

- Demand Policy Re-engineering:** Lobby ministries of health to position Family Medicine as the mandatory gatekeeper and bedrock of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
- Institutionalize Digital Health Competency:** Build localized CME programs, fellowships, and workshops that equip frontline doctors with telehealth and digital decision-making skills.
- Foster Regional Solidarity:** Share data, research, and operational successes through this newsletter and joint regional forums.

The future of healthcare in South Asia will be shaped in our clinics, community centres, and district hospitals. Let us step boldly into this digital era, holding fast to empathy, dignity, and compassionate care.

In solidarity and shared purpose,

Dr. Pramendra Prasad Gupta
President, WONCA South Asia Region

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIRST HALF OF 2026

The first half of 2026 has been a busy and inspiring time for family medicine across the WONCA South Asia Region. From academic sessions and professional learning to community initiatives, advocacy, and youth-led activities, family physicians across the region have continued to learn from one another, support their communities, and strengthen the role of family medicine.

College of Family Medicine Pakistan (CFMP)

The College of Family Medicine Pakistan (CFMP) continued to promote professional development, clinical education, and advocacy throughout the first half of 2026.

Educational Programs of the College

- Six Months accredited hybrid course “Reproductive and Sexual Health” under leadership of Prof. M. Zaman Shaikh. Concluded on 1st February 2026
- “Diploma in Diabetes” in collaboration with Malir University concluded December 2025 and new session started.
- “Diploma in Family Medicine” in collaboration with Malir University concluded December 2025 and new batch started in July 2026.
- Antibiotic Stewardship Program started February 2026
- Fighting Diabetes course to be re-recorded with new presentations and new matter as per new scientific upgrades.



Certificate Distribution Program — 19 April 2026



Educational session on diabetes mechanisms

Weekly Lectures & Certification

Weekly Lectures by renowned faculty with free registration for Family Physicians started in Jan 2026 and ongoing every Sunday with outstanding faculty.

Certificate Distribution Program for Reproductive & Sexual Health conducted on 19th April 2026 where more than 80 doctors received their certification.

Tribute to Professor M Zaman Shaikh

A tribute was given on 19th April 2026 in the presence of College faculty, the Board and members. His services for the College in terms of educational programs for Family physicians over the last one decade were highly appreciated and lauded. He is the Course Director for all diabetes Programs of the College. The event was covered in popular national media. The event was followed by Annual Dinner and musical program for the members.

Participation & Collaboration with Societies

- College of Family Medicine Pakistan chaired a session at APASL Conference in December 5-7, 2025, at Movenpick Hotel, Karachi, Pakistan.
- College Participated with an awareness stall in the PCDA 9th Symposium January 10–11, 2026, at Expo Centre, Karachi. College of Family Medicine Pakistan joined hands in a national effort to advance diabetes awareness and the crucial role of primary care physicians.
- College of Family Medicine Pakistan Participated in MRCGP Int. exams 27th Jan to 15 Feb. 2026
- College Participated with their logo and Support to Pakistan society for the study of Pain in their Pain Conference in Bhurban July 2026
- College actively supported the MMIDSP in their HIV awareness campaign.



CFMP stall at PCDA Symposium



Panel discussion at conference



CFMP Board & faculty members

The Institutional Review Board & Other Initiatives

The Institutional Review Board of the college was formed to train and facilitate the family Physicians to conduct ethical research. The Institutional Review Board conducts two monthly meetings. The Board Reviewed and approved 4 Protocols in the time period January to June 2026.

College & the Digital Media: College showed a very positive presence on Facebook with around 5000 followers, and viewership of more than 30,000 on some posts.

The Internship program was initiated in January 2026 ran successfully for 3 months under the leadership of Prof Marie Andrades and concluded in March 2026.

Meet the expert Program: This started as a new initiative which covered some important areas like neurology, emergency surgery, plastic surgery, and pain management experts.

A strategic way-forward workshop was done Feb 2026 with the Board Members to form groups working on organizational strength, governance and leadership and financial viability of the organization.

World Family Doctor Day: 19 May 2026

CFMP joined with family physicians around the country in celebrating World Family Doctor Day 2026 under the theme: "Compassionate Care in a Digital World." The theme reflected on how family physicians can combine technological innovation with the human connection at the heart of primary care.



World Family Doctor Day 2026 — Compassionate Care in a Digital World

Obituaries



Dr Muhammad Amin Kharadi

The Chair of the College left for the heavenly abode on 30th June 2026. A great loss for the College and the Family Physicians. He ran a charitable clinic in a low socioeconomic area for the past 4 decades, apart from working as a Chief Medical Officer in a Hotel Group. He was associated with the College for the last five decades and served on the College Board for the last 3 decades. He also served as a member at large for WONCA. His contributions to the College and to Family Medicine were of prime importance. He was a mentor to countless family physicians and kept us motivated in tough times. Ever smiling and helpful. In December 2023 the College awarded him a Tribute for his outstanding services to Family Medicine.



Prof Emeritus Dr. Naseem Salahuddin

Passed away in a road accident in Morocco in 2026. College lost a very precious faculty. She was a famous figure for her outstanding role in eradication of Tuberculosis, Rabies, as well as antibiotic stewardship programs. She was a great supporter of the College and a star faculty in the Infectious Diseases training programs. Her services to the College in the last 2 decades would be fondly remembered.

College of General Practitioners of Sri Lanka (CGPSL)

The College of General Practitioners of Sri Lanka (CGPSL) continued a strong programme of professional education, public health advocacy, and community engagement.

MCGP Graduation & FCGP Conferment: 24 May 2026

The College celebrated members through the MCGP Graduation and FCGP Conferment, recognising professional development and contribution of GPs to healthcare in Sri Lanka.



MCGP Graduation & FCGP Conferment — 24 May 2026



Graduates taking the professional oath at BMICH

Preparing for GP Sri Lanka '26

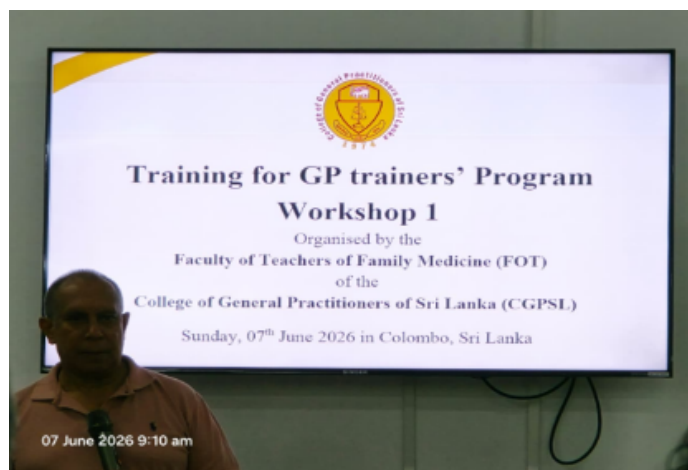
Preparations continued for the 51st Annual Academic Sessions — learning, professional exchange, and networking.

Pre-Congress Scientific Session: 10 May 2026

Scientific session focused on cardiovascular care: updating knowledge and sharing experience in managing cardiovascular risk in primary care.



Participants at CGPSL academic session



GP Trainers' Workshop — 7 June 2026, Colombo

Workshops & Professional Development

- **Strengthening GP Educators - 7 June 2026:** A GP Trainer workshop was conducted to strengthened educational capacity through improved teaching, assessment, mentorship, and learner-centred approaches.
- **PPE for Athletic Training - 4 April 2026:** CGPSL, in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Sports Medicine Association and Ministry of Health, conducted a GP workshop on Pre-Participation Examination (PPE), strengthening skills in sports fitness assessment and identification of athlete health risks.
- **Medical Certification & Cause of Death - 11 April 2026:** College with the Ministry of Health and Vital Strategies, conducted the MCCD training for GPs, strengthening accurate death certification and the quality of national mortality data.



Certificate presentation at CGPSL professional development event

Public Health & Community Engagement

National Nutrition Month – June 2026: Conducted the “Rethink Snacks” campaign to promote healthier dietary choices.

World Environment Day – 5 June 2026: Conducted an awareness campaign highlighting the link between planetary health and human wellbeing.

Webinars: Conducted educational webinars on metabolic risk, occupational health, asthma, gender-based violence, and ulcer management.

Legal Care+ Project: Conducted a community initiative supporting women, children, and families.

These activities demonstrate the expanding role of family physicians in clinical care, prevention, education, advocacy, and community wellbeing.

College of General Practice Nepal

The College of General Practice Nepal continued to support professional development and public engagement through academic and community-based activities.

Awareness Campaign & Walkathon — A health awareness campaign and walkathon were organised in Kathmandu by GPEMAN, promoting community engagement and awareness around health and wellbeing.

Continuing Medical Education — Regular CME activities strengthened clinical knowledge, experience exchange, and updates relevant to primary care.



World Family Doctor Day 2026 — GPEMAN, Nepal



Regional webinars & peer learning

SPICE ROUTE – YDM South Asia

The SPICE ROUTE – YDM South Asia initiative continued to provide a dynamic platform for young doctors across the region to connect, learn, and collaborate.

Regional Webinar Series (March–May 2026)

Date	Country	Theme	Attendance
6 Mar	India	World Obesity Day	145
24 Mar	Pakistan	World TB Day	110
7 Apr	Bangladesh	World Health Day	78
5 May	Sri Lanka	World Asthma Day	335

Strong participation, especially on World Asthma Day, reflects growing interest in regional peer learning. A World No Tobacco Day webinar was hosted by Sri Lanka on 31 May.

Country Activities – India

The Association of Family Physicians of India (AFPI) engaged young doctors through:

- Orientation to the Family Medicine Exchange Programme (164 participants)
- Classroom-based sessions for postgraduate trainees
- Preparations for the upcoming Spice Route India Conclave

Looking Across the Region

The first half of 2026 demonstrates the strength and diversity of family medicine across South Asia. Across Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and the wider region, family physicians and their organisations continue to:

- Academic programmes are strengthening clinical competence
- Youth initiatives are creating new opportunities for regional collaboration
- Public health campaigns are taking family medicine beyond the consultation room
- Professional organisations are creating platforms for lifelong learning and leadership

Together, We Strengthen Primary Care

As WONCA South Asia Region moves into the second half of 2026, the collective focus remains clear:

Stronger family medicine. Stronger primary care. Healthier communities.

The continued energy, collaboration, and commitment of family physicians across South Asia reaffirm the essential role of family medicine in building accessible, equitable, compassionate, and evidence-based health systems.