Department of Zoology

Faculty of Science / University of Peradeniya

Dr. Piyumali K. Perera

B.Sc. (Hons.) (Perad.), Ph.D. (University of Melbourne, Australia)

Senior Lecturer (Grade I)

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About Me

Dr. Piyumali Perera is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Zoology, University of Peradeniya, specializing in parasitology and molecular diagnostics. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Zoology and a PhD in Veterinary Parasitology from the University of Melbourne, Australia. Her doctoral research focused on Theileria orientalis infections in cattle, developing a high throughput molecular diagnostic tool, investigating disease epidemiology, and assessing the economic impact of oriental theileriosis on Australia's dairy industry. Her research interests include ticks and tick-borne diseases, soil-transmitted nematodes, freshwater fish parasites, zoonotic parasites, and the human gut microbiome. With an h-index of 12, she has received several awards for excellence in teaching and research. She also serves as Director of the Science-Industry Interaction Cell (SIIC), fostering academia–industry partnerships to promote innovation and applied research. Dr. Perera is committed to advancing parasitology, interdisciplinary collaboration, and mentoring future scientists to address global animal and human health challenges.

Higher Education Qualifications

PhD

The University of Melbourne
Australia
(2015)

BSc

University of Peradeniya
Sri Lanka
(2011)

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Awards, Scholarships, Memberships & Fellowships

- Award of Excellence in Research for 2025, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya
- Award of Excellence in Research for 2024, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya
- Award of Excellence in Teaching for 2021/2022, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya
- Award of Excellence in Teaching for 2020/2021, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya
- Award of Excellence in Teaching for 2019/2020, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya
- Award of Excellence in Research for 2019, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya
- University of Peradeniya Research Grants 2026 - Principal Investigator (Comparison of parasites of freshwater fish sold in fish stalls in selected districts in wet and dry zones of Sri Lanka)
- Postgraduate Institute of Science Research Grants 2022 - Principal Investigator (Molecular epidemiological investigations of ovine and bovine theileriosis in Jaffna, Sri Lanka)
- University of Peradeniya Research Grants 2022 - Principal Investigator (Investigations of bovine theileriosis and the role of other ruminants as reservoir hosts of theileriosis in Sri Lanka)
- National Research Council research grant (NRC grant no: 20-083) for 2020 - Co-Investigator (Canine tick-borne infections: reservoirs, tick vectors and zoonotic disease risk of rickettsial infections)
- National Science Foundation competitive research grant for 2019 – Co-Investigator (Tick-borne spotted fever group rickettsioses in the Central Province: types of pathogens, vertebrate reservoir host community composition and tick species)
- World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology - Louisiana State University Travel Award (2015)
- VW officer prize in Veterinary Science through Faculty of Veterinary Science, the University of Melbourne (2014)
- Australian Society for Parasitology (ASP) student conference travel grant (2015)
- Australian Society for Parasitology (ASP) student conference travel grant (2014)
- Dairy Farmers of Victoria Postgraduate Scholarship through Faculty of Veterinary Science, the University of Melbourne (2013)
- Australian Society for Parasitology (ASP) student conference travel grant (2013)
- Australian Postgraduate Award for 2013
- International Postgraduate Research Scholarship for 2013
- Runner-up for the abstract and presentation in the Postgraduate Symposium (pre-confirmed PhD category) by Faculty of Veterinary Science, the University of Melbourne (2012)
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Positions Held

- Director, Science-Industry Interaction Cell, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka (Part-time)- (August 2023 – Current)
- Committee Member, Internal Quality Assurance Cell, Postgraduate Institute of Science- (2025-2028)
- Secretary, Fundraising Committee for University of Peradeniya- (2025 - 2026)
- Member - Internal Quality Assurance Cell, Faculty of Science- (2023)
- Secretary - Student Advisory and Welfare Committee- (2022 - 2025)
- Secretary - Board of Study in Biomedical Sciences- (2023 - 2026)
- Senior Student Counsellor for Department of Zoology, University of Peradeniya- (2022-2023)
- Secretary/PGIS Research Congress (RESCON), Postgraduate Institute of Science, University of Peradeniya- (2022)
- Secretary/Board of Study in Zoological Sciences- (2021 - 2023)
- Senior Lecturer (Grade II) - University of Peradeniya- (September 2020 - now)
- Lecturer - University of Peradeniya- (2017-2020)
- Member - Board of Study in Biomedical Sciences, Postgraduate Institute of Science- (2019 - 2026)
- Temporary Demonstrator, University of Peradeniya- (2011-2012)
- Demonstrator, the University of Melbourne- (2012-2015)
- Temporary Lecturer, University of Peradeniya- (2015-2016)

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My Teachings

- BIO1072: Introductory Microbiology
- SCI4002: Industrial Training
- SCI4003: Industrial Training
- ZL206: Invertebrate Diversity
- ZL327: Animal Genetics and Molecular Biological Techniques
- ZL404: Applied Parasitology
- ZL428: Independent Study & Seminar

Research Interests (Research Fields/ Projects)

Parasitology, Epidemiology, Microbiology, Molecular Diagnostic Techniques

Ongoing Research and Projects

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Comparison of gastro-intestinal parasites with zoonotic and anthroponotic potential in two subspecies of toque macaque (Macaca sinica) in Sri Lanka

Conducted by Ms. Sandani Thilakaratne (Honours student in Zoology) Funded by University of Peradeniya Research Grants

Role of gut microbiota, helminth infection and their interaction in asthma in children naturally infected with helminths in Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

In collaboration with Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Cambridge and Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, the University of Melbourne.

Zoonotic gastro-intestinal parasites of dogs in a remote tea-growing area in Sri Lanka: A potential public health problem

Conducted by Ms. Tilini De Silva (Honours student in Zoology)

Canine soil-transmitted nematodes with special reference to Ancylostoma spp.

Honours Student: T.H.P. Sakunika Amarasingha

First report of oriental theileriosis in the Intermediate Zone, Sri Lanka: Is Theileria orientalis type 7 always apathogenic?

Subhasinghe, J., Mahakapuge, T.A.N., Madusanka, K. S., Rajakaruna, R.S., Jabbar, A., Perera, P.K. (2024).

First report of highly pathogenic Theileria luwenshuni in Sri Lanka: Are Jaffna sheep resistant to theileriosis?

Sandamali, T.M.C., Gajavathany, P., Rajeshwaran, M., Rajakaruna., R.S., Jabbar, A., Perera, P.K. (2025).

Subclinical infections of Babesia and Dirofilaria in dogs presented to a Veterinary Teaching Hospital: evidence for a silent reservoir of infection in Sri Lanka.

Ranahewa, D.K., Dangolla, A., Rajakaruna, R.S., Dewasmika, W.A.P.M., Pathirana, N.U.K., Chandrasekara, C.M.B.M.K., Perera, P.K. (2025)

First detection of highly pathogenic Theileria luwenshuni in goats in Sri Lanka: A potential threat to small ruminant farming.

Amarasinghe, S., Marasinghe, Rajakaruna, R.S., M., Gajavathany, P., Pathmathas, J., Perera, P.K. (2025).

Cost-effective and efficient diagnosis of bovine Theileriosis in a low-income setting

Amarasinghe, S., Marasinghe, M., Gajavathany, P., Rajeshwaran, M., Rajakaruna, R.S., Perera, P.K. (2025).

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Key Publications

PloS one - (2017)

Infections by human gastrointestinal helminths are associated with changes in faecal microbiota diversity and composition.

Journal of Clinical Microbiology - (2015)

Semi- quantitative multiplexed-tandem PCR for the detection and differentiation of four Theileria orientalis genotypes in cattle.

Conferences

World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology

HELD AT : Liverpool, UK - (20.08.2015)
TOPIC : *Semi-quantitative multiplexed tandem PCR for the detection and differentiation of Theileria orientalis genotypes in Australia and New Zealand*

Conference of the Australian Society for Parasitology and New Zealand Society for Parasitology

HELD AT : Auckland, New Zealand - (01.07.2015)
TOPIC : *Application of novel PCR assays for the detection and differentiatio n of Theileria orientalis genotypes in New Zealand.*

Conference of the Australian Society for Parasitology and New Zealand Society for Parasitology

HELD AT : Auckland, New Zealand - (01.07.2015)
TOPIC : *Establishment and application of a semi- quantitative multiplexed tandem PCR for the detection and differentiation of Theileria orientalis genotypes in Australia*

My Publications

Please goto the website.

https://sci.pdn.ac.lk/zoology/staff/Piyumali-Perera

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