



CARIBBEAN INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH

Prof. Susan Walker · Director

BSc Bristol, MSc, PhD Lond

OVERVIEW

We present some selected highlights from the Mona units of the Caribbean Institute for Health Research for the 2021 /22 academic year.

ACCESS

The academic programmes of CAIHR continued with most teaching and examination for the last academic year done online as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also continued to offer the Postgraduate Diploma in Health Research and Epidemiology in collaboration with the UWI Open Campus to increase access to training in these areas for persons who are unable to commit to full time study due to work or distance. We have used funds from our self-financing programmes to fund marketing of the Postgraduate Diploma and over the last academic year offered students enrolled on other graduate programmes on the Mona campus a subsidized tuition when completing credits in this programme.

The inaugural Jeremiah Global Scholarship was offered in August 2021 to students enrolled at The University of the West Indies Mona Campus with a strong social conscience who appreciate the value of change advocacy and people empowerment. Jeremiah Global is a public advocacy initiative originating out of the Caribbean Institute for Health Research, which is aimed at connecting people with resources for informed decision-making, personal transformation and success. There were two recipients, one each from the Faculty of Medical Sciences and the Faculty of Social Sciences.

ALIGNMENT

Members of CAIHR continued their work in the Jamaica Ministry of Health and Wellness COVID-19 task force and have maintained surveillance systems for COVID-19 in the region. In the last year we partnered with the Jamaica Ministry of Health and Wellness to offer a series of training sessions on the management of Sickle Cell Disease using the Project ECHO online platform.

The Child Development Group collaborated with the MOHW in the Ministry's implementation of the Reach Up early childhood parenting programme through primary health centres. Evaluation of the remote delivery model implemented due to the Covid-19 pandemic was completed and a report on the impact on parenting practices provided to MOHW and the PIOJ. The group also worked with the Early Childhood Commission (ECC), training government field officers to implement a virtual version of the Irie Homes Toolbox violence prevention programme with parents of young children. The programme was evaluated through a randomized trial and a report on the effects on parents' use of violence against children submitted to the ECC.

CAIHR was selected by the Ministry of Health and Wellness (Jamaica) to develop evidence based guidelines for the Management of three Chronic Diseases – Hypertension, Diabetes and Asthma. The team lead by Professor Trevor Ferguson includes other members of CAIHR, The Department of Medicine, Department of Community Health and Psychiatry, non-UWI members of the health team in government and private settings as well as patients affected by these conditions.

The University of the West Indies – University of Glasgow Nutrition Collaboration, led by Drs Kwesi Marshall and Debbie Thompson, (UWI-CHAIR MSc and MPhil/PhD Nutrition Co-ordinators) has continued their online Mini-Academic Exchange meetings and this network now includes PhD nutrition candidates from McGill University widening our students network and UWI's reach.

This third instalment of the 'History, Heritage and Identity' Symposium took place on Thursday November 11, 2021 pivoted on the painful history of European plunder and deprivation of the Caribbean by the Trans-Atlan-

tic Slave Trade and Plantation Economy, to consider contemporary opportunities for profitable UK-Caribbean Trade and Business in the Post-Brexit Environment. Professor Densil A. Williams, Pro Vice-Chancellor, and Principal, UWI Five Islands Campus; and Professor Matthew Smith, Professor of History and Director of the Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slave-Ownership, University College of London were the keynote speakers.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Members of the Department continue to be active in several governmental and non-governmental organizations providing technical expertise and leadership in our areas of specialization

AGILITY

CAIHR continues to identify and obtain external grant funding relevant to our research strategy and regional needs from local and international agencies and donors including the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), International atomic energy agency, the UK Global Challenge Research Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank, UKRI/Medical Research Council, The UK National Institute for Health Research and several others.

We wish to highlight the following grants which will help to build out a new area of research for the Unit – that of Climate Change and Health. Funding was received through the University College of London's Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change to establish a **Lancet Countdown Regional Centre for Small Island Developing States** at The Tropical Metabolism Unit. The Centre, headed by Dr. Georgiana Gordon-Strachan, will track progress on health and climate change in the Caribbean, Pacific and AIMS small-island developing states. The collaboration brings together 35 academic and UN institutions from every continent, tracking the world's response to climate change and the health implications of action and inaction.

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As a member of Global Diet and Physical Activity Network we were successful in obtaining a network grant from the NIHR valued at approximately £3.0 M for the GDAR-SPACES project. GDAR-SPACES will examine

the interaction of mass urbanisation, rapid climate change, and epidemics of poor diet and rising physical inactivity that all interact to create a syndemic that increases the risk of non-communicable diseases. The grant award led by investigators from UWI and the University of Cambridge include Universities and Research Centres in Cameroon, South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Brazil, as well as agencies such as UN Habitat. We believe that without this broad approach to understanding what is driving the NCD pandemic we cannot create effective, sustainable interventions to improve health in LMICs and other at risk populations. Our syndemic approach aims to develop interventions that will reduce the exposure of individuals in cities to these syndemic hazards, and at the same time reduce vulnerability of the wider built and food environments to these hazards. We will be exploring the ways that policy, community and commercial forces shape the built and food environments in these growing cities.

Grant funds are essential to maintain our research productivity and excellence and have allowed us to retain critical staff at a time when there is a freeze on many UGC posts and significant economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is therefore critical that we maintain our standards for reporting to funding agencies and research excellence to allow other investigators and the next generation of scientists to build on these efforts.

For the upcoming academic year we will continue in our efforts to increase enrolment in self-financing programmes and obtain research grant income as part of the UWI Strategic Plan's Revenue Revolution. Strengthening of systems to support income generation from these sources will allow us to be more ambitious in our plans and allow CAIHR to make a greater contribution to the University's financial health and international reputation.

ACCESS

STUDENTS

MPhil/PhD Candidates CAIHR Programmes

- "Breast milk intake, post-natal growth to one year and cardiometabolic risk factors in Jamaican infants" - Prof. Marvin Reid Supervisor to Ms. Judith McLean-Smith. PhD Nutrition

- "Evaluation of fat free mass as a proxy for muscle mass and its association with muscle function for the assessment of sarcopenia" – Prof Asha Badaloo **Supervisor** to Mr. Bentley Chambers, PhD Nutrition
- "Bioavailability of the indispensable amino acids of the red kidney bean in a typical Jamaican meal using a dual stable isotope tracer method" –Dr. Carolyn Taylor-Bryan **Supervisor** to Dr. Daniel Thomas, PhD Nutrition
- "The impact of a nutrition-based educational intervention on the development of obesity in a cohort of children from 2 years to 5 years of age" – Dr, Carolyn Taylor-Bryan **Supervisor** to Mrs. Tameka Duncan-Baker, PhD Nutrition
- "The Development, Implementation and Evaluation of the IRIE Homes Toolbox: A Universal Violence Prevention Programme" – Dr Helen Henningham **Supervisor** to Ms. Taja Francis, PhD Epidemiology
- "The effect of maternal infant feeding styles on childhood health and development in Caribbean infants: A longitudinal study" – Prof Susan Walker and Prof Marshall Tullloch-Reid **Supervisors** to Ms. Amika Wright, PhD Epidemiology
- "Policy Implications of HIV Drug Resistance and its Impact on the Jamaica HIV Epidemic" –Prof J. Peter Figueroa and Prof Marshall Tullloch-Reid **Supervisors**, MPhil Epidemiology
- "Effects of menstruation on sickle cell pain in Jamaican women with sickle cell disease". Monka Asnani Supervisor to Dr. Zachary Ramsay. PhD Epidemiology (UWI) Candidate. January 2022- Current
- "The Effects of Nutritional Status and Fitness on Performance, the Occurrence of Injury, and Opportunistic Illnesses during Exercise Training in Jamaican Adults". Dr. Suzanne Soares-Wynter **Supervisor** to Sheryl-Mae Johnson-Burke. MPhil Degree Awarded March 22, 2022.
- "Social Determinations of morbidity and mortality outcomes in sickle cell disease". Prof Monka Asnani Supervisor to Mr. Alphanso Blake. PhD Epidemiology (UWI) Candidate. September 2021- Current

MPhil/PhD and DM candidates other Departments

- "Smoking, cotinine levels and quality of life in adults with sickle cell disease". Prof Monka Asnani **Advisor** to: Mrs. Antoinette Barton-Gooden. PhD Nursing (UWI). August 2017- current
- "Knowledge, attitudes, practices, and barriers faced by primary care physicians in Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica regarding provision of patient nutrition care." Prof Monka Asnani **Supervisor** to Dr. Sophie

Abrikian. DM Family Medicine (UWI). Started May 2021- 2023

- "Prevalence and determinants of non-barrier contraceptive use in nulligravid females in Westmoreland." Prof Monka Asnani **Supervisor** to Dr. Henrika Gayle. DM Family Medicine (UWI). Started May 2021-2023

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS AND MONOGRAPHS

- Book Chapter: "The Clinical Usefulness of Prostate Cancer Biomarkers: Current and Future Directions"; McGrowder, D., Anderson-Jackson, L., Dilworth, L., Mohansingh, S., Cross, M. A., Bryan, S., Miller, F., Wilson-Clarke, C., Nwokocha, C., Alexander-Lindo, R., & McFarlane, S. (2022). In G. Kais, & Y. Hamdi (Eds.), *Cancer Bioinformatics* [Working Title]. IntechOpen. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.103172>

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- Thompson T, Dawkins Y, Rowe-Gardener S, Chin-Harty L, Hoe KK, **Ferguson TS**, Ehikhametalor K, Gordon-Johnson KA, Deyde V. Clinical Features and Outcomes of COVID-19 at a Teaching Hospital in Kingston, Jamaica. *MedRxiv*. 2022:2022.04.27.22274270. (Preprint)
- **Walker SP, Chang SM, Wright AS**, Pinto R, Heckman JJ, Grantham-McGregor SM. "Cognitive, psychosocial, and behaviour gains at age 31 years from the Jamaica early childhood stimulation trial." *J Child Psychol Psychiatry*. 2022 Jun;63(6):626-635. doi: 10.1111/jcpp.13499. Epub 2021 Aug 17.
- Walsh S, **Govia I**, Wallace L, Richard E, Peters R, Anstey KJ, Brayne C. "A whole-population approach is required for dementia risk reduction". *The Lancet Healthy Longevity*. 2022;3(1):e6-e8.
- Weimann A, Shung-King M, McCreedy N, Tatah L, Mapa-Tassou C, Muzenda T, **Govia I**, Were V, Oni T. "Intersectoral Action for Addressing NCDs through the Food Environment: An Analysis of NCD Framing in Global Policies and Its Relevance for the African Context". *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2021 Oct 26;18(21):11246. doi: 10.3390/ijerph182111246.
- **Williamson GA**, Rodrigo S, Blackman E, Ragin CC, Beck JR, **Tulloch-Reid MK**. "An Evaluation of Regional Cardiovascular Disease and Cancer Research Needs Using Conference Abstracts". *Ann Glob Health*. 2021 Aug 5;87(1):76. doi: 10.5334/aogh.2886.
- **Wright AS, Tulloch-Reid MK, Chang SM, Walker SP** (2021) "Maternal Characteristics Influence Infant Feeding Styles in Caribbean Women." *Public Health Nutrition* 24 (18) 6034-6045 <https://www.doi.org/10.1017/S1368980021002391>.

TECHNICAL REPORTS

- Gertler, P., Heckman, J., Pinto, R., Chang-Lopez, S., Grantham-McGregor, S., Vermeersch, C., Walker, S., Wright, A. (2021). Effect of the Jamaica Early Childhood Stimulation Intervention on Labor Market Outcomes at Age 31. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 9787.
- Smith JA, Chang SM, Walker SP Report on the impact of a remote delivery parenting program on parenting practices. Submitted to

ALIGNMENT

PAPERS PRESENTED

There were 22 papers presented at local and regional conferences

NON-REFEREED ARTICLES

- Gertler P, Heckman JJ, Pinto R, **Chang SM**, Grantham-McGregor SM, Vermeersch C, Walker SP, Wright AS. "Effect of the Jamaica Early Childhood Stimulation Intervention on Labor Market Outcomes at Age 31." National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 29292, Cambridge MA, September, 2021 doi: 10.3386/w29292
- **Marshall KG, Ferguson TS**. "Front-of-package labelling (FOPL) of pre-packaged foods and beverages: An evidence-based strategy for reducing diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the Caribbean" West Indian Medical Journal 69, 535–538 (2022)
- **Soares-Wynter S**. National School Nutrition & Wellness Standards (Jamaica). Ministry of Education, Youth and Information Jamaica.
- **Soares-Wynter S**. National School Nutrition & Wellness Policy (Jamaica). Ministry of Education, Youth and Information Jamaica.
- **Soares-Wynter S**. Global Health Advocacy Project - Obesity Prevention/Healthy Food Policy Campaigns Mass media educational and technical materials –
- **Soares-Wynter S**. "Come Inna Dis – A Radio Drama Series". Aired on Radio Jamaica, Love FM, NCU Radio and Mello FM. (For broadcast in Jamaica, March 2022)
- "We support FOPWL, front-of-package warning labels" October 2021."
- **Soares-Wynter S**. CARICOM Regional Standard for Labelling of Foods-Prepackaged Foods (Draft Standard)
- **Soares-Wynter S**. CARICOM Regional Standard for Prepackaged Foods – Nutrition Labelling Requirements

INVITED LECTURES

Members of CAIHR gave over 11 invited talks in areas ranging from sickle cell disease and other NCD management as well as Climate and Health.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Jennifer Knight Madden

- Member, Board of Governors, St. Andrew High School for Girls
- Co-Chair Sickle Cell Technical Working Group (National)
- Co-Chair the Surveillance, Monitoring & Evaluation, Research sub-committee of the National NCD Committee (National)
- Member, Advisory Panel on Ethics and Medico-Legal Affairs (National)
- Member Bureau of Standards Medical Facilities Technical Committee (National)
- Co-chair National Institutes of Health (NIH) Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) for the Realizing Effectiveness Across Continents with Hydroxyurea (REACH) trial Oct, 2017 to present (International)
- Co-chair National Institutes of Health (NIH) Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) for the Enhancing Preventive Therapy of Malaria
- Member, Board of Governors, St. Andrew High School for Girls
- Co-Chair Sickle Cell Technical Working Group (National)
- Co-Chair the Surveillance, Monitoring & Evaluation, Research sub-committee of the National NCD Committee (National)
- Member, Advisory Panel on Ethics and Medico-Legal Affairs (National)
- Member Bureau of Standards Medical Facilities Technical Committee (National)
- Co-chair National Institutes of Health (NIH) Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) for the Realizing Effectiveness Across Continents with Hydroxyurea (REACH) trial Oct, 2017 to present (International)
- Co-chair National Institutes of Health (NIH) Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) for the Enhancing Preventive Therapy of Malaria In children with Sickle cell anemia in East Africa (EPITOMISE) trial Nov, 2018 to 2021 (International)
- Chair National Institutes of Health (NIH) Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) for Promoting Utilization and Safety of Hydroxyurea Using Precision in Africa June, 2022- (International)
- Reviewer, NIHR Global Health Policy and Systems Research Programme (International)
- Reviewer, NIHR Funding Committee for Global Health Centres: Research and Institutional Capacity Strengthening In NCDs (International)
- Member Organizing Committee, 4th Global Congress on Sickle Cell Disease, Paris June 2022 (International)

- Member Organizing Committee, Sickle Cell Disease Association of America/National Institutes of Health Sickle Cell in Focus Conference 2022 (International)

Monika Asnani

- Appointed Member. Sickle Cell Disease Working Group. PhenX Collection on measures for 'Pregnancy and Sickle Cell Disease'. June 2022-
- Member Organizing Committee. Sickle Cell Disease Association of America/National Institutes of Health 15th Sickle Cell in Focus/ UWI Conference 2022
- Term Graduate Faculty Appointment. Duke University Graduate School. 2017-2022
- Co-Chair, Caribbean Primary Care Research group (CAPCRG), Caribbean College of Family Physicians. 2015-Present
- Board Member of Caribbean Network of Researchers in Sickle Cell Disease and Thalassemia since 2014
- Member, Global Evidence Synthesis Initiative (GESI) Network of Evidence Synthesis Centers. Since May 2017
- Academic Editor, Plos One Journal. July 2014- Present
- Board Member, Indian Cultural Society in Jamaica. July 2007- Present

Susan Walker

- Member, Advisory Board, Caribbean Centre for Health Systems Research and Development
- Member, Advisory Committee on Health Research, Pan American Health Organization
- Member of Data Safety & Monitoring Board for the Scaling Up Nurturing care, a Radio Intervention to Stimulate Early child development in Burkina Faso (SUNRISE) Trial, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

Carolyn Taylor-Bryan

- Member, Medical Association of Jamaica
- Member, Pediatric Association of Jamaica
- Member, National Infant and Young Child Feeding Committee

Kwesi Marshall

- Chairman of the National Food Industry Task Force (NFITF)
- Chairman of the Nutrition Sub-committee of the National Committee on Non-communicable diseases

Shelly McFarlane

- Member of the Adjudicating Committee, Ministry of Health and Wellness, National Health Research 2022
- Treasurer, The Jamaica Statistical Society

Georgiana Gordon Strachan

- Member, Board of Directors, Mico University, Jamaica
- Chair, Essential National Health Research Committee - National COVID-19 Agenda, Health Services Sub-Committee, Ministry of Health and Wellness, Jamaica

Suzanne Soares-Wynter

- The Heart Foundation of Jamaica - Board of Directors and Medical Sub-Committee Member
- Caribbean Regional Organization on Standards and Quality (CROSQ), Caribbean Regional Technical
- Sub-Committee on Food Labeling.
- Bureau of Standards Jamaica Limited - National Mirror Committee Member
- Bureau of Standards Jamaica Limited - Labelling and Technical Committee Member
- World Health Organization (WHO) Guideline Development Group: Management of young children and adolescents with obesity for improved health, functioning and reduced disability: a primary health care approach.
- Vital Strategies Healthy Food Policy Fellowship Fund Reviewer
- Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme of the Codex Alimentarius Commission - Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses
- Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme of the Codex Alimentarius Commission - Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (Member)
- National Food Industry Task Force Ministry of Health and Wellness, Jamaica. Consultant Member.
- Next Gen(d)eration of Leaders for a Well-Nourished World
- Jamaica Association of Professionals in Nutrition and Dietetics (JAPINAD) Standards and Regulatory Committee

Trevor Ferguson

- Chair National Committee on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) — Weekly Core Group Meetings & Meeting with Minister of Health and

Wellness, Permanent Secretary and CMO to update on NCD Committee matters

- Chair for CARPHA Hypertension Guidelines Development Committee

Ishtar Govia

- Member, Communications Sub-committee of Ministry of Health and Wellness Essential National Health Research Committee
- Caribbean Alliance of National Psychological Associations (CANPA) Executive Committee Member and Elections Committee Member.
- Marshall Tulloch-Reid
- Member, Ministry of Health and Wellness Jamaica COVID-19 Task Force.
- Advisor, Diabetes Educators of the Caribbean
- Examination Board, Caribbean Certified Diabetes Educators
- Statistical Editor, Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism

AGILITY

INCOME GENERATION

NEW GRANTS

1. **Funding source:** National Institutes of Health (NIH) **Title:** Synthesizing, interpreting and extrapolating interventions to foster human development **Investigators:** Susan Walker **Period of Award:** 19 August 2021 - 30 April 2026 **Total Value:** USD 111,949.00
2. **Funding Source:** National Institutes of Health (NIHR) Global Health Research Group on Diet and Activity (GDAR). **Title:** A syndemic approach to the prevention of diet- and physical activity-related NCDs **Investigators:** Georgiana Gordon-Strachan (UWI PI), Co-Investigators: Joanne Smith, Natalie Guthrie-Dixon, Marshall Tulloch-Reid, Trevor Ferguson, Suzanne Soares-Wynter. **Period of award:** 01 September 2021 – 31 August 2025. **Total Value:** £344,041.00
3. **Funding source:** Wellcome Trust/University College London. **Title:** Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change Regional Centre in Small Island Developing States **Investigators:** Georgiana Gordon-Strachan **Period of award:** 01 September 2021 – 31 July 2023 **Total Value:** £126,000.00
4. **Funding source:** Ministry of Health and Wellness, Jamaica **Title:** Procurement of Consultancy Service to Develop Jamaica's Guidelines for the Management of Diabetes, Hypertension and Asthma **Investiga-**

tors: T. Ferguson (PI and Hypertension Lead), Co-Investigators: Marshall Tulloch-Reid (Diabetes Lead), Jennifer Knight-Madden (Asthma Lead), Georgiana Gordon-Strachan, Monika Asnani, Lesley King, Simon Anderson. Period of award: 01 June 2022 – 30 November 2023 **Total Value:** J\$13,781,399.81

5. **Funding source:** LEGO Foundation **Title:** Reach Up: Global community and integration with health systems in Jamaica **Investigators:** Susan Walker **Period of award:** 01 June 2022 – 30 November 2023 **Total Value:** USD 221,835.00