

MONA AGEING AND WELLNESS CENTRE



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Head

OVERVIEW OF THE MONA AGEING AND WELLNESS CENTRE

The Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre (MAWC) in its tenth year of existence has continued its mandate of research, teaching and community service addressing age-related health, socioeconomic and health policy needs of the country and the Caribbean.

The MAWC has formed and maintained linkages with key stakeholders that are important for the fulfilment of its mandate. These include: the National Council for Senior Citizens in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) e.g. HelpAge Jamaica, HEART Foundation of Jamaica, HelpAge International (Caribbean), Caribbean Community of Retired Persons (CCRP), National Health Fund and the Board of Supervision (a statutory body operating in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development). The MAWC continued its close association with the Faculties of Medical

Sciences and Social Sciences along with several international universities e.g. Case Western Reserve, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, The University of Manitoba, University of Minnesota and The University of South Florida.

In its relatively short history, the MAWC has produced outstanding, innovative and robust research that has been published in highly respected and peer-reviewed journals. The MAWC's research has also been translated into landmark health policies and programmes that have positively impacted the lives of Jamaican and Caribbean older adults.

VISION, MISSION, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Vision

The Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre will be recognized nationally, regionally and internationally as a centre of excellence in gerontology research, teaching, policy development and community service.

Mission

The mission of the MAWC is to improve the health and wellness of the older adult population nationally and regionally through novel ageing research, policy development, teaching and community outreach.

The MAWC aims are to

- Promote healthy ageing throughout the life course
- Critically examine the biophysical, socioeconomic and psychological issues associated with ageing and propose appropriate programmes and successful models
- Strengthen knowledge and understanding of ageing issues across the region
- Promote the development of policy across the region

The specific objectives of the MAWC are to

- Develop an interdisciplinary programme of ageing studies within the University
- Work with Caribbean states and relevant agencies to develop policies and programmes to meet the challenge of population ageing.
- Disseminate current evidence on age-related issues.
- Establish and maintain current linkages with national, regional and international institutions concerned with and working on age-related issues
- Provide a service to older persons through an activity programme
- Provide seminars for older persons and other interest groups on pertinent issues such as – retirement, pre-retirement, caregiver issues and the management of chronic diseases
- Develop a systematic programme of community outreach that will raise the visibility of the UWI nationally and regionally

ACTIVITIES OF THE MAWC: 2014–2015

During the year under review, the MAWC continued its mandate of improving the health and wellness of the older adult population nationally and regionally through novel ageing-related research, teaching and community outreach.

The activities of the MAWC for 2014–2015 will be reviewed under the following headings

1. Research
2. Teaching
3. Community Service

RESEARCH

MAWC aims at forging research collaborations with national, regional and international institutions or organizations to create interdisciplinary teams that will best allow for an innovative gerontology research trajectory. Research activities in the MAWC for the year in review centred on the epidemiology, pathophysiology, biomedical (e.g. chronic diseases and geriatric giants), psychology and socioeconomic (caregiving, residential care, leisure activities, family support) aspects of ageing. These research projects include:

1Health and Social Status of Older Persons

In component I, a community-based survey of 2,943 persons, 60 years and over was completed in 2012. The project was funded by National Health Fund. The survey aimed to elucidate the health, social and economic status of older persons nationally with supportive qualitative data on caregiver issues. Anthropometric and biomedical assays were also completed on a subset of the sample. This project continues in the dissemination of information with several articles already published, accepted or submitted to peer-reviewed journals.

Component II, a community-based survey of 300 persons, 60 years and over is currently underway, working closely with an international radiologist, Dr. Peter Johnson, and a MRI facility and psychiatrist Dr. Roger Gibson. The goals of the project are to determine the types of dementia among a population of older adults with screen-positive and screen-negative cognitive impairment. The initial goal has been modified after the full funding for the project was not achieved. The analysis of the data and the recommendations emerging may point to major issues to be addressed and may recommend future policy directions and initiatives. Preliminary finding suggest that the study will also provide critical information on stroke and raised intracranial pressure. The research was approved by the UHWI/UWI/FMS Ethics Committee and has received funding from the National Health Fund. Eldemire-Shearer (PI) (\$6 million)

Sexual and Genitourinary Health Profile of Older Adults aged 50 years and above

This project, funded by the Principal's New Initiative Grant, is in collaboration with the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (Professor Horace Fletcher, Dean FMS) and Department of Surgery, Radiology, Anaesthesia and Intensive Care-Section of Surgery-Division of Urology (Dr. William Aiken, Urology). The main aims of the project are to: a) identify the major gynaecological and urological issues for which older adults seek care, and b) document older adult's perceptions and practices in relation to sexuality and ageing. Data collection for the first phase is complete and analysis has begun. This project will contribute to Mrs. Tyndale's PhD. Willie-Tyndale (PI) \$1.5 million.

Census of Older Adults Living in Communities around the UWI, Mona

The MAWC conducted a health and social status census of older adults in August Town, Elleston Flats, Hermitage, Mona Commons, and surrounding communities (2014). The project, funded by HelpAge Jamaica, initially aims to assess the needs of older adults in these communities including socio-demographic status, presence of chronic diseases, housing condition, disaster potential, training needs and screening for geriatric giants – falls, cognitive function, urinary incontinent and depression. In fulfilling the UWI mandate of community service, the next stage of the project will see the MAWC partnering with NGOs as well as the public and private sectors to appropriately respond to needs identified.

Sarcopenia and Ageing

The MAWC is currently collaborating with Solutions for Developing Countries (SODECO), headed by Professor Terrence Forrester, in Sarcopenia research. Sarcopenia is associated with an increased likelihood of falls and impairment in the ability to perform routine activities of daily living especially in older adults. This project is in the data collection phase using the cohort of older adults contacted during the "Health and

Social Status of Older Persons”.

Effectiveness of mobile health technology and support-group interventions to improve medication, dietary, exercise compliance and patient-provider communication among older adults with diabetes mellitus in Jamaica: A randomized controlled trial (2015).

The Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre in association with Millennia Community Foundation a non-profit organization in the State of Florida applied to the NIH Fogarty Grant for grant funding in February 2015. The project was not funded.

Effectiveness of mHealth interventions for improved patient-provider communication, adherence to treatment and self-management for older adults with type 2 diabetes mellitus in Jamaica: A RCT

The Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre in association with Millennia Community Foundation a non-profit organization in the State of Florida applied to the NIH Fogarty Grant for grant funding. The proposal was submitted to NIH in June 2015 and is currently in the review stage.

TEACHING

Teaching is considered a core function of the MAWC. All members of the academic staff teaches across all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of the Department of Community Health and Psychiatry in subjects such as research methods, biostatistics, epidemiology, primary health care, health management, gerontology and geriatrics. The teaching in gerontology/geriatrics is important in enhancing the education of medical, nursing, social work, public health and family medicine students at the UWI.

During the year of review, the MAWC in association with the Department of Community Health and Psychiatry also developed two new programmes of Gerontology – Master of Public Health in Gerontology and the Post Graduate Diploma in Gerontology. These programmes are the only ones of their kind in the English-speaking Caribbean. The proposal for the new programmes was approved by the UWI in April 2014 to be offered

in the new academic year. After advertisements, there were five (5) applicants for the Master of Public Health in Gerontology and four (4) applicants for the Post Graduate Diploma in Gerontology. Unfortunately most students either deferred their acceptance to the following year or asked for leave of absence. The reasons for leaves of absence were illness related largely because of the impact of the Chikungunya virus which caused lengthy absences from class and in one instance triggered a resurgence of underlying illnesses.

The courses in this programme are available to the MSc clinical nurse specialist (gerontology) at the UWI School of Nursing, Mona.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

An important component of the MAWC activities is services for older persons, their relatives, caregivers, schools and communities in general. The MAWC community activities are geared towards providing services that improve the social, psychological and physical well-being of these groups.

Census of Older adults

An ambitious and extensive community service project was started in this review year with the first phase being the census of older adults living in communities around the UWI, Mona. The census, carried out by a team of MAWC staff and funded by a grant of US\$1,000 from HelpAge Jamaica, was done to determine the health and social needs of older adults. The next phase of the project will see MAWC partnering with various organizations including the UWI Township Project to develop appropriate interventions.

Dementia Support Group

In response to the increasing concerns about mental health and older adults, The Mona Ageing & Wellness Centre under the auspices of Prof. Denise Eldemire-Shearer (Executive Director) and the Mental Health

Department of the Ministry of Health, Jamaica under the auspices of Dr. Maureen Irons-Morgan (Director) organized a Stakeholders' Consultation to facilitate the development of a Dementia Support Group Programme. Mrs. McKoy-Davis, in the Mona Ageing & Wellness Centre, coordinates activities around this initiative.

Key government and non-government stakeholders were invited to participate in the Consultation held on Wednesday May 20, 2015. The objectives of the Consultation were to: a) Identify areas for prioritization in dementia care and support and b) Formulate/conceptualize a framework for the development of a Dementia Support Group.

The members of the meeting decided that consultation was required with caregivers of persons with Dementia in order to know and understand the needs of care-givers (including mode of support provision) which may vary.

Computer classes

Computer classes for older adults have continued with several groups of older persons attending and completing courses. The classes, which are offered at a minimal cost, are focused on introducing older adults to computers, typing documents, browsing the internet, creating and accessing email. In their assessment of the course and teachers, the seniors overwhelmingly thought that the content was excellent and delivered at an appropriate level. They assessed the teachers as being competent and patient. For the period under review 15 older adults attended classes for introductory computer skills.

This year, an advanced computer class was designed and will commence in the next academic year. These classes will include introduction to 1) the use of social media to remain in contact with family, locally and abroad (video conferencing), 2) transferring and archiving pictures on phone and camera and 3) securing and protecting online passwords.

Gym

The Rotary Club of St. Andrew and the British High Commission sponsored the equipment for a gym for older adults on campus and in surrounding communities. An exercise programme began in January 2014 in collaboration with the School of Physical Therapy, UWI and the Department of Community Health, Health Centre. In order to participate in the activities, persons aged 50 years and older need to receive medical clearance from their physician as well as sign a consent and photo-release forms. Older adults who are cleared medically and have signed the necessary forms undergo a screening process by physiotherapist Dr. Gordon. This allows for individualized intervention. The exercise programme is overseen by Dr. Gordon and her colleague Ms. Williams, along with physiotherapy students in the clinical component of their programme.

Information Brochures

The Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre in keeping with its mandate of providing current, accurate and evidence-based information revised fifteen brochures to ensure uniformity of presentation and readability. Four new brochures were developed on caregiver issues, diabetes mellitus, dementia and mental health issues among older adults. The process will continue in identifying other important topics for brochure production. This initiative was led by Mrs. Julian McKoy-Davis.

Online Presence

The Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre, in this academic year has also developed a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/uwimawc> – to provide a mechanism of disseminating valuable information to the public on various topical issues. The web page also allows for mutual exchanges between the Centre and our stakeholders. This initiative was led by Mrs. Douladel Tyndale.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed Journal Articles

2014–2015

- Mitchell-Fearon, K., **Waldron, N.**, Laws, H., James, K., & Holder-Nevins, D. **Eldemire-Shearer, D.**, (August, 2014). Hypertension and Diabetes Prevalence in Older Persons in Jamaica, 2012. *West Indian Medical Journal*, 63(5): DOI: 10.7727/wimj.2014.065.
- Mitchell-Fearon, K., James, K., **Waldron, N.**, Holder-Nevins, D., **Willie-Tyndale, D.**, Laws, H., & **Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (December, 2014). Falls amongst community-dwelling older persons in Jamaica. *Sage Open*, DOI: 10.1177/2158244014564351
- Standard-Goldson, A., Williams-Green, P., Smith, K., Segree, W., James, K., **Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (January, 2015). Building family medicine postgraduate training in Jamaica: Overcoming challenges in a resource-limited setting. *Educ Prim Care.*, 26(1), 18–23.
- **Waldron, N.**, Laws, H., James, K., **Willie Tyndale, D.**, Holder Nevins, D. Mitchell Fearon, K., Abel, W., & **Eldemire Shearer, D.** (March, 2015). The prevalence of cognitive impairment among older adults in Jamaica. *West Indian Medical Journal Open*, 2(2), 19 – 24. DOI: 10.7727/wimjopen.2014.003
- Mitchell-Fearon, K., **Waldron, N.**, Laws, H., James, K., Holder-Nevins, D., **Willie-Tyndale, D.**, **Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (May, 2015). Non-communicable diseases in an older, aging population: a developing country perspective (Jamaica). *J Health Care Poor Underserved*, 26(2), 475-87. doi: 10.1353/hpu.2015.0041.

Accepted for publication

- Mitchell-Fearon, K., **Tyndale, D.**, **Waldron, N.**, Holder-Nevins, D., James, K., Laws, H., & **Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (2015). Cardio-vascular disease and Cancer: A dichotomy in utilization of clinical

preventive services by older adults in a developing country. *Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine*.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- **Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (2014). “Retirement! A new beginning? Lifestyle planning”. STATIN: Retirement Planning Seminar 2014
- **Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (2015). Older persons in Jamaica 2012 findings of Study. HPM’s Jamaica House August 26, 2014
- **Gibson, R., Mitchell-Fearon, K., Waldron, N., Abel, W., James, K., Willie, D., Laws, H., Holder-Nevins, D., & Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (2014). “Lifestyle issues and depressive symptoms among a nationally representative sample of community dwelling older persons”. XVI World Congress of Psychiatry, Madrid, Spain, September 14-18, 2014.
- **Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (2015). “Risk factors for hypertension in the elderly”. 7th Annual International Conference on Nephrology and Hypertension. January 29–31, 2015 at the Montego Bay Convention Center.
- **Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (2015). “Mental health issues in older persons”. CCFP 6th Triennial Conference 2015 – “Family Physicians: Integrating Mental Health Care into Family Practice at the Mona Visitors’ Lodge February 6, 2015
- **Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (2015). “The psychological impact of chronic diseases on aging”. Annual Scientific Conference of the Medical Association Bahamas March 5, 2015
- **Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (2015). “Ageing: How to do it successfully and live life to the fullest”. Department of Correctional Services June 23, 2015
- **Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (2015). “Older persons Jamaica 2012”. National Council for Senior Citizens’ Conference on Ageing and Development – Ensuring an Enabling and Supportive Environment. June 25, 2015.

- Eldemire-Shearer, D. (2015). “Wellness and wellbeing”. Bethel Baptist Church Vacation Bible School Programme. July 20 2015
- McKoy-Davis, J. (2015). “Handling leisure time”. Bethel Baptist Church Vacation Bible School Programme. July 21 2015
- Eldemire-Shearer, D. (2015). “Relationship and Intimacy”. Bethel Baptist Church Vacation Bible School Programme. July 22 2015

PUBLIC SERVICE

MAWC academic staff have served the public in various organizations nationally and internationally including:

Professor D. Eldemire-Shearer

- Patron, National Council for Senior Citizens
- Chairman, Caribbean Community of Retired Persons
- Director, HelpAge Jamaica
- Member, Central Health Committee – Ministry of Health
- Member, Medical Association of Jamaica
- Member, West Indies Medical Journal Editorial Board
- Member, Gerontological Association of America
- Member, International Federation of Ageing

Dr. Norman Waldron

- Programme Director, HelpAge Jamaica
- Member, FMS Committee on Graduate Studies and Research
- Reviewer, McMaster Online Rating of Evidence (MORE)

Mrs. Douladel Tyndale

- Member, Gerontological Society of America
- Member, HelpAge Jamaica

- Member, International Epidemiological Association
- Member, UHWI/UWI/FMS Ethics Committee
- Reviewer, *West Indies Medical Journal*

Mrs. Julian McKoy Davis

- Member, HelpAge Jamaica
- Member, Gerontological Society of America