



# MONA AGEING AND WELLNESS CENTRE

*Departmental Report August 2020 - July 2021*

**Professor Denise Eldemire-Shearer · Head**

## WORK OF DEPARTMENT

The Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre (MAWC) continues its multi-disciplinary approach to improving the health and well-being of older adults locally and regionally through innovative ageing-related research, teaching and community outreach.

### Consultancies

MAWC completed an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)-commissioned case study on ageing and long-term care in Jamaica. The case study, which was the first of its kind for an English-speaking country in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), provides the IDB with information to support ageing initiatives in Jamaica and the LAC region. The final report was submitted and accepted in May 2021. The work aligns well with the Centre's commitment to providing evidence to guide action. In June 2021 MAWC completed a data gathering exercise on behalf of the IDB. The activity was a part of IDB's Survey on long-term care in Latin America and the Caribbean and included conducting key informant interviews with multiple public and private sector stakeholders across 7 IDB-borrowing countries in Latin America and The Caribbean. The survey aims to improve understanding of older adults' "needs and the coverage they have in the areas of pensions, health, and long-term care for dependency."<sup>1</sup>

## **Research**

The Centre completed two studies examining the effect of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and containment measures on older persons. The first study, led by Dr Kayon Donaldson-Davis, focused on the effect on health and health services utilization while the second study focused on the effect on social relationships and support and was led by Dr Douladel Willie-Tyndale. Findings of both studies were presented by Professor Eldemire-Shearer in high-level COVID-19 planning meetings at The Ministry of Health and Wellness and to the general public via interviews in the media. Information from both studies have influenced protocols, messaging, support systems and response activities in relation to COVID-19 and social and physical distancing. A study is currently underway investigating the prevalence of depression and anxiety in older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants are being recruited from among those older adults visiting the COVID-19 vaccination site at Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre. This study is led by Dr Kimberly Ashby-Mitchell and is in the data collection phase. The Centre is awaiting disbursement of funds to support data collection activities for the study on "Breast Cancer Burden and Screening Strategies in Jamaica". The study was approved by the University of the West Indies Ethics Committee and will be funded by the Ministry of Health Research Grant Awards to Dr. Kayon Donaldson-Davis. \$1.5 million. The Centre has received a commitment from the Ministry of Health and Wellness to fund its Midlife Study (40-59) on Health Work and Retirement Planning in Jamaica. Professor Denise Eldemire-Shearer is the Principal Investigator on the project. Commencement has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Teaching/Training**

### **UWI Degree programmes**

Four new students were enrolled in the Gerontology track in the Master of Public Health programme for the 2020/2021 academic year. One student has completed all coursework and examinations and has been recommended for award of the degree. The remaining three students are expected to complete by June 2022. The Post-Graduate Diploma (PG-Dip) in Gerontology had six new students; five have successfully completed the programme and the sixth student is expected to complete by December 2021. The four (continuing) students who are registered in the MPhil/PhD Ageing Studies programme pursued graduate courses and undertook preliminary work on their research proposals. The Centre's newest programme offering, the Post-Graduate Diploma in Geriatrics, began January 2021. The first student cohort comprises seven physicians practicing across four Caribbean countries (Jamaica, The Bahamas, Cayman Islands, and Trinidad & Tobago). The programme's main focus is to prepare medical doctors for the specialized care of older adults. The programme confronts contemporary difficulties with measures which suit the local health systems and population and is the premier, centralized training interface for Geriatrics within the Caribbean. The programme is offered in collaboration with the Department of Medicine, University of the West Indies, Mona.

## **Non-Degree programmes**

In September 2020, MAWC and Strategic Management and Training Consultants (SMTTC) Career Institute entered an agreement to develop and deliver an advanced patient-care technician training course. The course is intended to provide trainees with knowledge and skill to provide nursing and caregiving services to patients, including older adults. For its part, Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre agreed to develop and teach a gerontology module as well as facilitate in-person examinations. In keeping with the agreement, MAWC developed a gerontology module which was delivered virtually to the first cohort of students January to April 2021. All eighteen (18) participants were successful in their final gerontology exams. The Board of Supervision (for the Relief of the Poor in Jamaica) in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development approached MAWC to coordinate and facilitate training of its Poor Relief officers and Infirmary Matrons. The training programme was delivered virtually over 13 weeks (September 14, 2020 to December 16, 2020) and had thirty-four (34) participants. Trainers included MAWC staff and relevant subject matter experts from other organizations. At completion, participants received a Certificate in Poor Relief Administration.

## **Community Service & Outreach**

The MAWC continues to provide community support and services for older persons, their relatives, caregivers, and communities in general.

## **COVID-19 Vaccination Activities**

Since March 2021, MAWC has partnered with the Ministry of Health and Wellness in its effort to vaccinate 65% of the Jamaican population by March 2022. In addition to facilitating vaccinations of priority groups at different phases of the country's vaccination programme, the Centre has also specially accommodated older adults, members of the UWI community, and delegates of the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport. Vaccines are routinely administered at MAWC Monday to Friday beginning at 9:00 am. In April 2021 the Centre participated in a five-day concentrated vaccination blitz effort (Saturday - Tuesday) where over 6,000 vaccines were administered at the Centre's site. Up until July 31, 2021, the Centre had administered over 16,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccination site at MAWC is managed by Professor Denise Eldemire-Shearer with other MAWC staff performing clinical (Dr. Tanya Edwards and Dr. Kayon Donaldson-Davis) and administrative duties. Since the start of the vaccination activities, the Centre has received overwhelming support from The UWI Mona Principal, Professor Dale Webber and the University community including: medical and other student volunteers; clinicians from University Hospital of the West Indies and the Department of Community Health and Psychiatry; and other volunteers from the campus community. UWI Campus Security provides services including manning access points and permitting entry to the vaccination site. The Kingston and St Andrew Health Department also sends a cadre of Community Health Aides who carry out electronic registration of clients.

## **Computer Classes**

Computer classes were not held during the period under review. Existing physical and social distancing guidelines hinder the delivery of the course in its current format.

## **Gym**

The gym remained closed during the period under review due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Public Engagement Activities**

In partnership with Alzheimer's Jamaica, MAWC hosted a webinar on September 21, 2020. Dubbed "Let's talk about dementia: looking at the whole person", the session targeted the general public and persons providing care for someone with dementia. Topics included Dementia 101, Legal implications, Finance, and Self care. Speakers included MAWC staff and members and affiliates of Alzheimer's Jamaica. The webinar was coordinated by Ms Annazika Watkins.

- Professor Eldemire-Shearer and Dr Willie-Tyndale participated in a webinar series on Ageing in Central America and The Caribbean in June 2021. The series was hosted by NTD Fundacion which is a satellite centre of the International Institute on Ageing, United Nations for The Caribbean and Central America. Prof Eldemire-Shearer spoke on June 4, 2021 on older persons Jamaica's COVID experience, while Dr Willie-Tyndale spoke on ageing and sexual relationships on June 15, 2021.
- On June 15, 2021 Dr. Willie-Tyndale participated in the National Council for Senior Citizens' World Elder Abuse Awareness Day activities. Dr. Willie-Tyndale spoke on addressing elder abuse from the rights perspective.
- Professor Eldemire-Shearer participated in World Economic Forum's Healthy Ageing and Longevity Dialogues in July 2021. The sessions brought together health care workers, advocates, international agencies and other players to address the challenges and opportunities faced in Latin America and The Caribbean with respect to facilitating healthy and active ageing. On the 29th Professor Eldemire-Shearer was a panellist presenting regional perspectives on the issue.

## **Dissemination of Ageing Information**

- The Centre produces a quarterly newsletter called MONAge. The periodical shares information on the work of Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre in addition to resources for older adults and prospective clients. Dr. Julian McKoy Davis serves as Editor-in-Chief. Production of the newsletter was interrupted this year and will resume in the upcoming academic year.
- The Centre continued the online initiative of engaging the public through its Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/uwimawc>. This provides a platform for disseminating valuable information to the public on a variety of topical ageing issues and allows for mutual exchanges between the Centre and its stakeholders.

- Emails providing relevant information on issues affecting older adults and public health systems are circulated to organizations including National Council for Senior Citizens, Caribbean Community for Retired Persons (CCRP) and to retired UWI staff. This initiative is being led by Ms. Annazika Watkins.

## **Day Centre**

This initiative is still in the planning phase. Arrangements for the needed resources including physical infrastructure are yet to be finalized; primarily the allocation of a house promised by UWI.

## **Scholarly work**

### **Papers/Posters Presented At Scientific Meetings**

1. Ashby-Mitchell, K., Willie-Tyndale, D., & Eldemire-Shearer, D. Proportion of dementia explained by five key factors in Jamaica. Poster presented at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America held virtually November 4-7, 2020.
2. **Willie-Tyndale, D., Aiken, W., and Eldemire-Shearer, D.** Severity of lower urinary tract symptoms and related quality of life among male urology clinic attendees 50 years and older at a tertiary hospital in Jamaica. Paper presented at the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual CARPHA Health Research Conference held virtually June 16-19, 2021.

### **Publications**

#### **Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters**

1. **Quashie, N. T., McKoy Davis, J., Willie-Tyndale, D., James, K., and Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (2021). Gender differences in grandparent caregiving and life satisfaction of older Jamaicans. In Claster, P & Blair, S. (Eds.). *Aging and The Family: Understanding changes in structural and relationship dynamics. Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research*, Vol 17, 97-121.

#### **Peer-reviewed Articles**

1. Ashby-Mitchell K., Donaldson-Davis K., Eldemire-Shearer D., (2021). Risk Factors for Chronic Disease Comorbidity: The Health and Social Status of Older Persons in Jamaica. *International Journal on Ageing in Developing Countries*, 5(2),120-129.
2. Ashby-Mitchell, K., Willie-Tyndale, D., & Eldemire-Shearer, D. (2020). Proportion of dementia explained by five key factors in Jamaica. *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, 78(2), 603-609.
3. **Willie-Tyndale, D., Donaldson-Davis, K., Ashby-Mitchell, K., McKoy Davis, J. Aiken, W. D., and Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (2021). Sexual Activity and Depressive Symptoms in Later Life: Insights from Jamaica. *Clinical Gerontologist*, 44(3), 316-330. DOI: 10.1080/07317115.2021.1882636
4. **Willie-Tyndale, D., Eldemire-Shearer, D.** and Aiken, W. D. (2020). Severity of lower urinary tract symptoms and quality of life among men 50 years and older at a urology clinic in Jamaica. *International Journal on Ageing in Developing Countries*, 5(2),146-157.



5. James, K., Thompson, C., Holder-Nevins, D., **Donaldson-Davis, K., Willie-Tyndale, D., McKoy Davis, J.,** Chin-Bailey, C., and **Eldemire-Shearer, D.** (2021). Socio-demographic, Health and Functional Status Correlates of Caregiver Burden Among Care Recipients Age 60 Years and Older in Jamaica. *Journal of Community Health*, 46(1), 174-181. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-020-00865-1>.
6. James K., Chin-Bailey C., Thompson C., **Donaldson-Davis K.,** Eldemire-Shearer D., (2020) Zarit Burden Interview among Caregivers of Community-Dwelling Older Adults in a Caribbean Setting (Jamaica): Reliability and Factor Structure Health & Social Care in the Community. November 30, 2020 DOI: 10.1111/hsc.13244.

## **Non-Refereed Research Based/Scholarly Publications**

### **Book Chapters**

1. **Ashby-Mitchell, K.** & Henry, F. Stressors and Academic Performance. In: *University Student Life and Learning: Challenges for Change*. Kingston, The University of Technology Jamaica Press.
2. **Ashby-Mitchell, K.** & Henry, F. Behaviours and Academic Performance. In: *University Student Life and Learning: Challenges for Change*. Kingston, The University of Technology Jamaica Press.

### **Public service**

MAWC academic staff members continue to serve in various capacities locally and internationally.

#### • Professor Denise Eldemire-Shearer, PhD

|                |   |                    |
|----------------|---|--------------------|
| 2017 - Present | Health Research MOH Committees                                  | Chair              |
| 2016 - Present | PIOJ Health TWL/Vision 20/30                                    | Member             |
| 2016 - 2019    | 10 Year Strategic Plan Ministry of Health                       | Member             |
| 2016 - Present | UHWI Hospital Board   | Member             |
| 2016 - Present | Caribbean Community Retired Persons                             | Honorary Chairman  |
| 2016 - 2018    | Homeless Task Force Ministry of Health                          | Member             |
| 2007 - Present | National Council for Senior Citizens                            | Patron             |
| 2002 - Present | Central Health Committee  | Member             |
| 1987 - Present | Action Ageing Jamaica   | Executive Director |
| 2014 - Present | International Federation on Ageing (IFA)                        | Member             |
| 1988 - Present | Foundation Member, Caribbean Public Health Association (CARPHA) | Member             |
| 1987 - Present | Medical Association of Jamaica (MAJ)                            | Member             |
| 1982 - Present | Gerontological Society of America                               | Member             |

#### • Douladel Willie-Tyndale, PhD

|                |  |        |
|----------------|--|--------|
| 2014 - Present | Gerontological Society of America        | Member |
| 2014 - Present | International Federation on Ageing (IFA) | Member |

2011 - Present West Indian Medical Journal Reviewer  
2021 Journal of Health Care for the Poor Reviewer and Underserved

• Julian McKoy Davis, PhD

2019 - Present Canadian Association of Gerontology Member

2018 - International Federation on Ageing Annual Conference Canada (August)  
Volunteer

2017 – 2019 Technical Policy Committee reviewing the National Policy for Senior Citizens,  
Green Paper 2018 Member

2017 - Present International Federation on Ageing Member

2017 - Present Journal of Health Care for the Poor and  
Underserved Reviewer

2017 - Present Grand Families: The Contemporary Journal  
of Research Reviewer

2016 - Present National Council for Senior Citizens Board Member

2014 - Present Gerontological Society of America Member

• Kayon Donaldson-Davis, B.Sc. MBBS

2021 National Council for Senior Citizens Board Member

2019 – Present Gerontological Society of America Member

2019 – Present Jamaica Medical Doctors Association Member

• Kimberly Ashby-Mitchell, PhD

2021 Journal of Alzheimer's Disease Associate Editor

## Select Speaking Engagements (Individuals)

Prof Eldemire-Shearer

• Age is not a liability. Rotary Club, Belize. February 24, 2021

• Retirement Seminar: Adjusting to Retirement Lifestyle. Bank of Jamaica. February 26, 2021

• World Social Work Day - Social Work Training in Collaboration with Department of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work - March 1, 2021

• Documentary on Bunny Wailer's missing elderly wife - documentary focused on vulnerable women who have gone missing or are homeless - March 2, 2021

• Age is not a liability. Kingston and St Andrew Lodge Retirement. March 14, 2021

• CARPHA 65th Annual Health Research Conference June 16-19, 2021

• The Coronavirus Pandemic: Lessons learnt to chart a way forward. Medical Association of Jamaica Symposium. June 12, 2021

Dr Julian McKoy Davis

- The Challenges of Ageing. Batch 143 - Mico Teacher's College. Information Session. Webinar Presentation. July 17, 2021.
- Ageing & The Family. Church of the Firstborn of Jamaica & Overseas Fellowships Family Month. Webinar Presentation. May 17, 2021.
- The Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre (MAWC) and its Services. Portmore & Old Harbour Community College. Webinar Presentation. April 27, 2021.
- Older Women and the Golden Years. Church Of The Firstborn in Jamaica National Women's Conference. Webinar Feature. April 25, 2021.
- Unsung Heroes: Caregivers of persons living with Dementia. Kiwanis for Disability Day. Webinar Presentation. September 12, 2020.
- Ageing...Are You Prepared? Olivet Seventh Day Church. Webinar Presentation. August 26, 2020.

