



JA Kids: The Jamaica Birth Cohort Study 2011
 Department of Child Health
 University of the West Indies Mona
 Kingston 7, Jamaica
 jakids2011@gmail.com

BACKGROUND

Between 1986 and 2003, the University of the West Indies (UWI Mona) and the Ministry of Health collaborated on a series of Birth Cohort Studies in Jamaica. Although these studies had significant impact on various policies, programmes and interventions for children and their families they were undertaken prior to the explosion in knowledge on the early years and therefore did not collect detailed data on children in the cohort of 0 – 2 years and their family/supportive environments. Such factors are now deemed critical to childhood, national and human development.

OBJECTIVE

The primary study objective is to collect primary, longitudinal data on the physical and emotional wellbeing of parents and children aged 0 – 2 years to advance our knowledge on child development in Jamaica.

APPROACH

Participants were recruited at 20 – 28 weeks of pregnancy during March to September 2011. Subsequently, contact will be made with parents and their children at birth, 9 months, 12 months, 18 months and 24 months. At each contact, participants will be asked questions about their health and well-being, their child's growth and development, the child's environment, nutrition and parental practices. A randomly selected focus group of 2000 children will receive more detailed developmental and behavioural assessments and evaluations.

VALUE

The study will improve the health and well-being of Jamaica's children by providing valuable data on the relationships among a wide range of family, school, community, and individual variables. It will also contribute to our understanding of the various factors that influence health, disease and social and emotional development in young children. Findings from the JA kids study will also benefit Jamaica by providing the health, education, social and academic sectors with information from which to develop national policies and programmes to ensure the best possible outcomes for our children and families.

COLLABORATION

Investigators include scientists and practitioners in medicine, social sciences, genetics and nutrition and leading academic institutions both locally and internationally. The JA Kids Steering Committee includes representatives from UWI, STATIN, NEPA and the Ministries of Health, Education and Labour and Social Security.

SUPPORT

The project is supported by a grant from the Japanese Special Fund which is administered by the Inter-American Development Bank

CONTACTS

The Principal Investigator of the JA Kids study is Prof. Maureen Samms-Vaughan and the primary research site is the Department of Child Health at the UWI (Mona). For more information, please contact Dr. Charlene Coore-Desai at (876)-622-2066 or by email at jakids2011@gmail.com.