DEAN'S MESSAGE

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It is my pleasure to welcome readers to this special supplement of the West Indian Medical Journal, featuring selected abstracts from the 32nd Faculty of Medical Sciences Annual Research Conference, under the theme "Health Resilience in a Changing World: Evidence, Innovation and Practice." This publication represents an important milestone in our continued commitment to advancing scientific inquiry and strengthening the research culture within our Faculty.

The University of the West Indies, together with other local research and academic institutions, have a mandate to provide thought leadership, particularly in addressing the complex challenges facing our society. This responsibility requires us not only to educate and train future generations of professionals, but also to undertake the rigorous, relevant and innovative research needed to understand our problems and develop solutions grounded in the realities of our people. We must be prepared to ask difficult questions, challenge existing assumptions and generate evidence that informs policy, shapes practice and drives sustainable development.

This mandate carries significance far beyond our immediate region. Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are home to approximately 80% of the world's population. Research that responds to the health priorities and lived realities of these populations therefore has the potential to yield benefits on a global scale. By investing in locally relevant research, strengthening our research capacity and ensuring that our findings inform clinical practice and public policy, we can contribute solutions that are both responsive to Caribbean needs and applicable to other resource-constrained settings around the world.

The FMS Annual Research Conference provides an important platform for this work. It brings together faculty members, clinicians, researchers, postgraduate students and undergraduate students to share findings, exchange ideas and foster collaborations across disciplines. Their engagement helps to cultivate the next generation of researchers and thought leaders who will shape the future of health in Jamaica, the Caribbean and beyond.

The publication of selected conference abstracts in this supplement is an important step in extending the reach and impact of the research presented. It provides an opportunity for the wider scientific and medical community to engage with emerging findings and underscores the importance of disseminating research beyond the conference setting. I encourage our researchers to build on these initial contributions by developing their work into full manuscripts and pursuing publication in peer-reviewed journals, thereby strengthening the evidence base available to inform practice, policy and future investigations.

I extend sincere appreciation to the members of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, our research partners, conference organisers, reviewers, presenters and students whose dedication and collaboration have made this initiative possible. I also acknowledge the West Indian Medical Journal for providing a valuable avenue through which our research can reach a broader audience.

As we advance our research mission, let us remain focused on producing knowledge that informs decisions, addresses societal needs and builds a healthier, more resilient future for Jamaica, the Caribbean and the wider world.