

Public Lectures

University-based Health Research: Nourishing Bahamian Medicine for over a Decade

M Frankson

With the provision of formal medical education in The Bahamas through The University of the West Indies (UWI), the sagacity of incorporating a functional Research Unit within the School of Clinical Medicine and Research based on the grounds of the Princess Margaret Hospital in Nassau has become indisputable. For over a decade, this unit has nurtured a team-spirited approach to having faculty and students (undergraduate and postgraduate) enthusiastically develop research proposals, create relevant research management plans and successfully complete their studies while adhering to ethical considerations. Conjoint ownership of this research unit's catalytic potential for increasing research capacity through competent service offerings has begun to take root among both UWI stakeholders and professionals in training from neighbouring government-sponsored institutions. This presentation will highlight both the breadth of research projects with which this unit has been involved and possible ways in which engagement in these pursuits have benefitted medical care being offered in The Bahamas. A vision for collaboratively advancing meaningfully into the future will also be presented.

Can We Meet the Challenges to Curb Obesity in the Caribbean?

FJ Henry

The silent escalating epidemic of obesity is the underlying cause of most deaths in the Caribbean. If action is not taken to curb the growth of our increasingly overweight populations, the resultant burden of chronic diseases will overwhelm our health systems and ultimately hinder our overall health and economic development. To combat obesity effectively, the driving forces as well as the obstacles need to be clearly identified and acted upon. This paper argues that substantial reductions in the prevalence of obesity are more likely to come from structural and policy-related changes to the environment than from medical interventions targeted at the individual. The complexity of the obesity problem in the Caribbean is elaborated, and the paper calls for strong public policy measures which can create the conducive environment necessary for individual behavioural change regarding healthy eating and increased physical activity. The paper presents key policy options that could substantially reduce obesity in Caribbean countries individually and collectively.