

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

*The theme for this year's conference and workshop, **Violence, Trauma and Development** lends itself to multidisciplinary discourses and hence, our collaboration with the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA) Jamaica. We are grateful for the joint effort with this non-governmental organisation, not only for their financial support, but also for the expertise and guidance freely offered by its team leaders, Drs Elizabeth Ward (Chair) and Deanna Ashley (Executive Director).*

Since its launch in 2004, the VPA has coordinated partnerships and shared best-practices for violence prevention. Yet the work must continue and engagement of more stakeholders is needed now more than ever. We continue to receive far too many reports of intentional, and often deadly, attacks on males and females alike, spanning all age groups, all socio-economic classes, all communities, rural and urban, north coast and south. Not to be forgotten too is the loss of lives on our roadways across the island, most commonly attributable to reckless activities and flagrant disregard for the road code.

Unfortunately, being bombarded daily with news of this nature has arguably diminished and even numbed the sensitivities of many, but it is exactly for this reason that we ought to be resolute in our efforts to reverse the trend. As researchers, our mandate is not solely to discuss the problems but we are expected to propose and, where possible, implement evidence-based interventions. Particularly if we acknowledge our current levels of violence and trauma as a public health crisis, then appropriate application of epidemiological tools to mitigation efforts is warranted. The Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS) at The University of the West Indies (UWI), by virtue of its clinical, biomedical, allied and public health departments, is well positioned to contribute to this effort.

This year we warmly welcome Professor Jonathan Shepherd as our Sir Kenneth Standard Distinguished Lecturer. Professor Shepherd has had a distinguished career in the United Kingdom (UK) research spanning wound healing and psychological impact of violence and maxillofacial trauma, development of the Shepherd Injury Severity Scale

(SISS) and multiagency violence prevention and victim support. His work has led to the Cardiff Model, a successful violence prevention strategy which has been adopted across the UK, is now taking root in the United States and which he will share with us during this conference. We also bring together scholars of epidemiology, geography, sociology, psychology, law, forensic science, physical and neuro-rehabilitation, including our visitors from the Institut Guttmann in Barcelona.

With a continued spirit of excellence and as The UWI celebrates its 70th year, this 27th Annual Research Conference and Workshop from the FMS supports the institution's overall mission to advance education, create knowledge and foster development of the Caribbean region and beyond.

We invite you to attend our mainstay series of events - the Opening Ceremony featuring the Sir Kenneth Standard Distinguished Lecture on the Epidemiology of Violence; our Scientific Sessions of oral and poster presentations showcasing research being undertaken within and outside the faculty; our theme-based Research Workshop with plenary lecture by Professor Shepherd and our Ethics Seminar on, "Caring for the Vulnerable Patient".

Added to the offerings this year is a breakfast, "Meet the Professors" workshop on building an academic career, a "Culture of Responsibility" workshop conducted by the American Society for Microbiology and a Crime Scene and Forensics Lab Demonstration.

We also sincerely thank our sponsors for partnering with us and invite you to visit their booths.

We trust our conference will excite and stimulate your intellectual interest, spark further dialogue and research and, most importantly, inspire change for the betterment of our peoples. Thank you for joining us. Welcome.

*Dr Christine Walters
Chairman
Organizing Committee
Faculty of Medical Sciences
Annual Research Conference and Workshop 2018*