

Chancellor's Message

I am pleased to endorse formally this collection of twenty operational research manuscripts on "Paediatric and Perinatal HIV/AIDS in Jamaica". This work emanated from the unique five-year collaboration between The University of the West Indies (UWI) and the Jamaican Ministry of Health. The UWI remains grateful to and appreciative of the international guest editors, Professors Sten Vermund and Paul Krogstad, the West Indian Medical Journal, the many authors, external sponsors, patients and their families, who contributed to make this programme a success.

Worldwide, 2.1 million (1.9 to 2.4 million) children were living with HIV and 290 000 (270 000 to 320 000) children died from AIDS in 2007. Here in Jamaica, a total of 884 cases of HIV/AIDS and 388 deaths in children were reported from 1986 through December 2007. Due in large part to the work of this team throughout Jamaica, there has been a reduction in mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and HIV-attributable morbidity and mortality in children. This journal describes the many interventional strategies employed, outreach activities and strong collaborations that were forged in the preceding five years to achieve these objectives. There are many reports encompassing preventative interventions, clinical manifestations of HIV in women and children, psychosocial issues, case series and viewpoints.

Much work remains to be done to ensure that the scourge of HIV/AIDS is completely removed, not only from Jamaica, but also from the Caribbean region and the entire world. In reaching for this goal, this team clearly embodies the adage from one of South Africa's longest surviving children with HIV/AIDS, which we should all embrace: "Do all you can, with what you have, in the time you have, in the place you are." (Nkosi Johnson, 1989–2001).

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