

Foreword

A Message from the Director

**In recognition of the
11th Annual Research Day Symposium
The UWI School of Clinical Medicine and Research,
The Bahamas**

The Research Committee sets out in its mission statement “to facilitate the improvement of health of the people of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas through clinical research that will produce valuable knowledge for the prevention and management of diseases, and formulation of health policies and programmes”.

No healthcare malady presents a greater burden to our population than obesity. With a national profile of two out of every three persons in The Bahamas, and one out of every three children of school age, being overweight, the need for national policies and interventions cannot be overstated. In its missive on Adult Obesity, Causes and Consequences, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention underscores the magnitude of this public and global health issue: “obesity is a serious concern because it is associated with poorer mental health outcomes, reduced quality of life, and the leading causes of death in the U.S. and worldwide, including diabetes, heart disease, stroke and some types of cancer”.

Outscored only by hypertension, obesity and overweight are the leading risk factors for non-communicable diseases, the foremost cause of mortality in the Caribbean. With the reality that our countries are experiencing the fastest rise of overweight children, the lives of our current and future generations are at stake. We do not have the luxury or latitude of time to engage in the debate of whether obesity is a disease or a lifestyle disorder. It is both. The challenge to curbing this public health problem requires the formulation and implementation of intervention strategies.

This 11th Annual Research Day Symposium addresses obesity, the disease and the lifestyle disorder. The agenda highlights the magnitude of the problem in our region, shifts to making the diagnosis, and progresses naturally to both the medical and surgical treatment options. There is a major focus on lifestyle changes and the need and benefits of optimizing dietary habits. We welcome the cadre of international and regional researchers on the podium. I applaud the continuing research initiatives of our students and faculty: the quality and quantity of research as defined by the abstracts meet the standards for publication as a supplement in our West Indian Medical Journal. We commend the efforts of the Research Chairman, Dr Darron Halliday, and the epidemiologist, Dr Morton Frankson.

I would be remiss not to highlight the introduction of the writers’ workshop to launch the Symposium. We are mindful that over the years, we have published less than 10% of the School’s research output in peer-reviewed journals. We must change this. The workshop challenges students and faculty to produce draft submissions of studies completed but not yet published, and to have access to the benefit of our visiting international researchers as reviewers. Publish we shall.

Dr Robin Roberts
Director

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See you there!