

## Principal's Message

I am pleased to extend heartiest congratulations to the editors and co-authors of this special issue of the West Indian Medical Journal that commemorates the fiftieth year of independence of Jamaica and the twin island-nation of Trinidad and Tobago. It is also a celebration of fifty years since the University of the West Indies became a full degree granting institution separating from the University of London.

There is no gainsaying that medical research and clinical practice within the Caribbean region have impacted development in these countries in significant ways. The articles and abstracts in this commemorative issue of the journal appropriately document the new research frontiers that are being conquered in the effort to consolidate the gains of the past fifty years. Whatever the area of medical research – HIV and sexual practices, sickle cell disease, children's exposure to violence, management of food and nutrition problems, or the mental health of the region – Caribbean researchers and clinicians by themselves, or collaborating with their international colleagues, through their interventional strategies continue to inform and influence policy directions toward sustainable national and regional health and development.

The medical problems of the pre-independent Caribbean are noticeably different from those encountered today. For example, mortality from infectious disease has declined, while mortality from chronic diseases continues to increase. There is always the need, therefore, to develop new strategies to confront the emerging challenges. As the articles in this edition of the Journal indicate, steady progress has been made in doing so.

The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus is proud to be associated with the West Indian Medical Journal. I join with the Editorial Board in thanking the global research and funding partners who contributed to the success of the research that is featured in this special edition of the Journal. May this critical partnership continue and strengthen over the next fifty years!

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