

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES
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## Vice Chancellor's Message

On behalf of the Regional University of the West Indies, I extend congratulations on the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the West Indian Medical Journal (WIMJ). The initiation of this Journal within three years of the founding of the University (College) of the West Indies and its first faculty, the Faculty of Medical Sciences, manifests the bold vision of our Founders who conceived of an institution that would reach beyond its walls to impact the broader West Indian community.

Along with the creation of the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), the formation of Extra-Mural departments in a number of West Indian countries, the creation of the WIMJ and within its first decade or so, the founding of the Tropical Metabolism Research Unit, this “fledgling” institution declared to the world that it would not confine itself to teaching but become a “fulsome” university conducting research, with a Caribbean focus, transmitting newly gained knowledge to its regional stakeholders and beyond. These initial centres and the WIMJ have endured, evolved and become even more significant over the years – the ISER of yesteryear becoming the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies (the Extra-Mural departments evolving into a School for Continuing Studies which in turn has become the Open Campus; the TMRU becoming the TMRI (Tropical Medicine Research Institute); the WIMJ becoming an even more robust publication. This and other manifestations of the massive growth of our university in 62 years are testimony to the work of generations of able academic scholars, administrators and leaders of UWI.

It is fitting that this issue of the WIMJ is addressing non-communicable diseases (NCDs), a matter that will be addressed in September 2011 by global leaders in the United Nations. One cannot help but feel a sense of great pride in

knowing that this UN initiative had its origins in actions taken by government and health leaders of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), who first took the unusual step of hosting a summit on NCDs in 2007. One of the major visionaries behind this significant achievement was our Chancellor, Sir George Alleyne, who combines the intellect, imagination, drive, regional and global connectedness to enable initiatives such as these to be formulated and executed. It is noteworthy that he was a medical student of UWI about the time of the founding of the WIMJ. It is likely that the UN conclave will include policy initiatives already being considered or implemented by the CARICOM leaders to combat the underlying causes of NCDs. Steps to combat obesity, smoking, inappropriate diets and eating habits, are subjects that are receiving the attention of some of our Governments and the UN conference will not only re-emphasise that need locally, but engender more action by governments globally.

As the UWI looks to its future, particularly in times of restrained financing and increased competition, this 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WIMJ must serve as an important opportunity to re-commit ourselves to the publication of an even more robust journal. One that is attentive to sharing new and existing knowledge about subjects relevant to the health and well-being of Caribbean people and that will engender improvement in the practice of medicine and healthcare delivery for another 60 years and beyond.

Professor E Nigel Harris  
Vice Chancellor  
University of the West Indies  
Mona, Kingston 7