

Vice Chancellor's Message

At the end of 2007, there were 15.5 (14.2 to 16.9) million women living with HIV throughout the world. The Caribbean has the world's second highest HIV seroprevalence, behind Sub-Saharan Africa. In Jamaica, the HIV epidemic is predominantly heterosexual with a sero-prevalence of 1.6% in pregnant women.

The Kingston Paediatric and Perinatal HIV/AIDS (KPAIDS) Programme is a joint collaborative initiative between The University of the West Indies and the Jamaican Ministry of Health with funding from the Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS Foundation and other partners who all collaborated together to address the Paediatric and Perinatal HIV/AIDS epidemic in Greater Kingston as a model for Jamaica. This is the second issue of the West Indian Medical Journal in five years that is dedicated solely to reporting the work of the KPAIDS team in preventing HIV and reducing morbidity and mortality of HIV/AIDS in Jamaican women and children. Their collaborative initiatives have reduced mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS from 29% to 6.6% with use of short course Zidovudine and more recently to 2–5% with use of highly active antiretroviral drugs.

Through the maxim "Together we can!" of Ophelia Haayama, an HIV-infected pregnant woman from Zambia, the KPAIDS team is clearly accomplishing its mission of "reducing mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS, while improving the quality of life for children and families who are living and affected by HIV/AIDS". We applaud the patience, dedication, thoroughness and splendid work of our world-class external guest editorial team, Professor Sten Vermund, Professor Paul Krogstad and Ms Julie Lankford; the many international guest reviewers of the articles; Professor Everard Barton, Mrs Urcella Scott and their staff at the West Indian Medical Journal; Professor J Peter Figueroa and Jamaica's National AIDS Programme; the many co-authors, patients and their families, our sponsors, as well as the countless others who made this significant effort even possible.

Congratulations to all who continue to work assiduously in sustaining these efforts to keep this disease at bay.

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