



MONA AGEING AND WELLNESS CENTRE

Denise Eldemire-Shearer, PhD, MBBS – Executive Director, MAWC

WORK OF MONA AGEING AND WELLNESS CENTRE

For the period under review, the Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre (MAWC) demonstrated its commitment to improving the health and well-being of older adults through innovative ageing research, teaching and community outreach.

ACCESS

TEACHING/TRAINING

The Centre pursued several initiatives prior to and during the review period to attract new students to its programmes, enhance student experience, and improve student academic development.

Degree Programmes

One new student and six continuing students pursued courses in the Gerontology track of the Master of Public Health programme for the 2022/2023 academic year. From this group two students completed all courses and exams and have been recommended for award of the Degree. The remaining students will continue the programme in the 2023/2024 academic year. The Post-Graduate Diploma, Gerontology programme had an intake of three new students, all of whom have now completed all courses in the year-long programme and have been recommended for award of the Diploma.

The Centre was successful in establishing a partnership arrangement with Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre in Nassau, Bahamas which allows students enrolled in the Post-Graduate Diploma in Geriatric Medicine programme to participate in a short elective rotation at the facility. This inclusion bolsters the clinical component of the

programme affording the students an experience they are unlikely to get anywhere else in The Caribbean. One of the two new students who enrolled in the programme in August 2022 pursued this elective rotation for a three week period in July 2023. The other student is scheduled to do same in September 2023.

We continue to engage with alumni, professional associations, governments, and international development partners to promote our programmes. Advertising through traditional and social media is also undertaken, using student testimonials to complement basic programme information. This year as part of our Careers in Ageing Week activities (March 26–April 1, 2023), MAWC team members led career talks with UWI Mona final year students in medicine and social work to inform them of career options in the field of ageing and training opportunities at the MAWC. The Centre also participated in a Career Exposition at Excelsior Community College on March 16, 2023.

Non-Degree programmes

MAWC in partnership with the Board of Supervision (BOS), Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development hosted a 300-hour Certificate in Poor Relief and Human Services Administration training. This training targets members of staff of the Poor Relief Department and Infirmaries, and is a part of the process of confirming/promoting staff. A total of 28 participants from 10 parishes and two other departments/agencies were engaged in the programme. Teaching concluded at the end of July 2023 with final exams in August 2023. This is the second time in recent years that MAWC has partnered with the BOS and the Ministry to host this training exercise. A graduation ceremony is being proposed for November 2023 in commemoration of Local Government Month. The graduation is also expected to include the cohort of 32 participants who were trained in the 2020 staging of the programme.

MAWC hosted three 1-day training exercises in First Aid & CPR in November 2022 for a total of 56 participants. The participants were primarily UWI Staff from various departments.

COMMUNITY SERVICE & OUTREACH

Over the review period the MAWC provided community support and services for older persons, their relatives, caregivers, and communities in general.

Vaccination Activities

In partnership with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, COVID-19 vaccine administration continued over the review period, subject to vaccine availability in the country. The Influenza vaccine was also added to the offerings.

Computer Classes

Computer classes for older adults have been suspended. The programme is under review and a more expansive information technology programme is being designed to address the needs of older adults.

Gym

The gym was reopened in July 2023. MAWC staff facilitate supervised exercise sessions twice a week at no cost to adults 60 years and over. Benefits of the exercise programme are already evident with improvements in clients' health and fitness (determined objectively and subjectively).

Dissemination of Ageing Information

The Centre hosted four webinars and participated in one on-Campus wellness event over the period. The first webinar held August 5, 2022 was dubbed 'Re-ignited for Purpose' and was held in recognition of Jamaica's 60th anniversary of independence. Panellists reflected on the 1962 celebrations in Jamaica and discussed older adults' role in modern Jamaica. The second webinar, 'Navigating Dementia' (August 10, 2022), targeted the general public and caregivers to persons with dementia in two concurrent sessions. The session for the general public was focussed on increasing awareness about the condition while the session for caregivers provided space for those affected by dementia to share struggles, exchange ideas, and learn coping strategies. The remaining two webinars were held during the afore-mentioned *Careers in Ageing Week*. One featured men in the field of ageing and explored the role and value of men as advocates and programme leaders in ageing. The other explored engaging seniors through art and discussed possible benefits including social, emotional, and physical benefits.

MAWC participated in the UWI Wellness Day activities on March 22, 2023. We had a booth display and disseminated information focussing on a life course approach to health and wellness. We also provided COVID-19 vaccination services. Our involvement in this Campus-wide initiative provided the opportunity share with internal stakeholders and promote the message of health and wellness within our Campus community.

The Centre continued the online initiative of engaging the public through its Facebook and Instagram pages. These channels allow for the disseminating of valuable information to the public on a variety of topical ageing issues and allows for mutual exchanges between the Centre and its stakeholders. We are developing a social media strategy for more focused and consistent engagement with our audiences.

Health Fairs

On July 25, 2023 MAWC supported with the Ministry of Health and Wellness' "Know your Numbers" campaign in the co-hosting of a health fair in the St. Andrew Eastern Constituency. In addition to jointly organizing the event, MAWC provide geriatric screening services and checks for attendees 60 years and older.

Day Centre

Effective April 1, 2023, a house located at West Road on the Mona Campus was assigned to MAWC to support our Activity Day Centre programme which is being established as part of initiatives under an existing Technical Cooperation Agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The house will be retrofitted to enhance accessibility and age-friendliness. MAWC will undertake fundraising initiatives and seek donations to support the retrofitting of this facility. The Day Centre is expected to meet a critical service need in the area of community-based long term care and will serve as a model for the Region.

ALIGNMENT

SCHOLARLY WORK

Papers/Posters Presented at Scientific Meetings

- Edwards, T. "Quality of life, depression, anxiety and stress among older adults living with HIV/AIDS in Kingston and St Andrew, Jamaica during the COVID-19 pandemic." Poster presented at the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) 67th Annual Health Research Conference held in Nassau, The Bahamas. April 27–29, 2023.
- Eldemire-Shearer, D. "Caregiving in Jamaica." Paper (Abstract) presented at the International Federation on Ageing (IFA) 16th Global Conference on Ageing held in Bangkok, Thailand. June 27–30, 2023.
- Willie-Tyndale, D and Eldemire-Shearer, D. "Potential barriers to seeking and utilising sexual health services among women 50 years and older: Insights from Jamaica." Paper (Abstract) presented at the International Federation on Ageing (IFA) 16th Global Conference on Ageing held in Bangkok, Thailand. June 27–30, 2023.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed (Published)

- Odle-James, T., & Willie-Tyndale, D. (2023). Companions' Chronicles: experiences of home care workers in the Community Elder Care (Companion) Programme in Barbados. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 42(4), 589–96.

PUBLIC SERVICE

MAWC academic staff members continue to serve in various capacities locally and internationally.

Professor Denise Eldemire-Shearer, PhD

2022	Member, Selection Committee for the Jamaica 60 Diamond Jubilee Awards for Excellence
2022	Chair, National Planning and Execution Committee for Health-care Workers Appreciation
2021–Present	Chair, Prescriptive Rights For Nurse Practitioners Committee
2020–Present	Member of National Coordinating Committee Vaccine Implementation
2018–Present	Member of the Services Commission
2017–Present	Chair, MOHW research subcommittee
2017- Present	Member of Ministry of Health TWG on Health
2016–2019	Member of 10-Year Strategic Plan Ministry of Health
2016–Present	Member, PIOJ Health TWL/Vision 20/30
2016–2018	Member of PIOJ Task Force of Poverty Reduction
2016–2021	UHWI Hospital Board
2016–Present	Honorary Chair, Caribbean Community Retired Persons
2016–2017	Member of Homeless Task Force Ministry of Health
2014–Present	Member, International Federation on Ageing (IFA)
2011- 2016	Chairman, Caribbean Community Retired Persons
2010–2011	UHWI Hospital Board – Minister's Representative
2007–Present	Patron National Council for Senior Citizens
2003–2015	Chairman of Board of Supervision
2002–Present	Member, Central Health Committee
2003–2006	Member, National Advisory Board on Disability, Ministry of Labour and Social Security

2002–Present	Member, Central Health Committee
2002	Ministerial Task Force on Volunteer Programmes for Universities. Ministry of Social Security
2000–2002	Deputy Chairman, Board of Supervision, Ministry of Local Government.
1999	Chairman, International Year of Older Persons Activities.
1998–2010	Deputy Chairman, Golden Age Home, Ministry of Local Government.
1998–2001	Deputy Chairman, Management Committee JADEP Programme.
1996	Consultant to Boston University IDB Health Sector rationalization Project for Barbados.
1996–2003	Member, Task Force on Pension Reform.
1994–1999	Board Member, Food for the Poor.
1989–1993	Member, Verley Home Board of Directors.
1989	Member, Government Task Force National five-year plan.
1987–1995	Member, United Way of Jamaica.
1988–Present	Member, Foundation Member, Caribbean Public Health Association (CARPHA)
1987–2006	Chairman, National Council for Senior Citizens.
1984–1998	Board Member Golden Age Home, Ministry of Local Government.
1984–1992	Member, American College of Preventive Medicine
1984–1992	Member, National Council for the Aged.
1987–Present	Executive Director, Action Ageing Jamaica
1987–Present	Member, Medical Association of Jamaica (MAJ)
1982–Present	Member, Gerontological Society of America

Douladel Willie-Tyndale, PhD

2014–Present	Member, Gerontological Society of America
2014–Present	Member, International Federation on Ageing (IFA)

Julian M'Koy Davis, PhD

2022–Present	Member, ON TRAumatiC stress and ageing: a global network (ON TRACK)
2020–Present	Liaison/Advisor, Strategic Management & Training Consultants Career Institute (SMTC CI)

2019–Present	Ad hoc Reviewer, <i>The Gerontologist</i>
2017–Present	Ad hoc Reviewer, <i>Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Under-served</i>
2017–Present	Ad hoc Reviewer, <i>Grand Families: The Contemporary Journal of Research</i>
2016–2023	Board Member, National Council for Senior Citizens
2014–Present	Member, Gerontological Society of America

Kayon Donaldson-Davis, B.Sc. MBBS

2019–Present	Member, Gerontological Society of America
2019–Present	Member, Medical Association of Jamaica
2020–Present	Member, American Geriatrics Society
2021–2023	Board Member, National Council for Senior Citizens

Tanya Edwards, MBBS, MPH

- Member, Kingston and St Andrew Primary Care Doctors Association
- Member, Jamaica American Friendship Association (JAFA)
- Member, Medical Association of Jamaica
- Director, Doctors for Life
- Member, American Geriatrics Society
- Praimanand Singh, MD, MPH, M.Sc.
- Member, Medical Association of Jamaica
- Member, American College of Sports Medicine
- Member, American Association of Emergency Physicians
- Member, International Federation of Sports Medicine
- Select Speaking Engagements (Individuals)

Prof Eldemire-Shearer

- *Medical Issues in vaccinating the elderly*. Caribbean College of Family Physicians Ethics Webinar: August 25, 2022
- Cari-Med Group Ltd & Apotex Inc. Webinar – Panel discussion. October 9, 2022
- *Make mental health & well-being for all a global priority*. Panellist. World Mental Health Awareness 4. October 10, 2022.
- *Caucuscentric*, 3rd Edition of Gender and Sexuality Studies 2022 – Hybrid Event October 24–25, 2022, Dubai, UAE
- *Population ageing: From threat to opportunity*. Panellist. 6th Global Symposium on Low Fertility and Population Ageing. Virtual Event. November 8–10, 2022.

- *The Ageing Physician: knowing when it is appropriate to stop practising*. Ethics Symposium. November 27, 2022
- The Professional Development Committee of WIGUT (Jamaica) workshop on Leadership. March 30th, 2023.
- UDOP: The 28th Annual International Diabetes Conference. April 21, 2023
- *Our World is Ageing: What are the implications for older women?* Keynote address at International Federation on Ageing 16th Global Conference, Bangkok, Thailand June 24–27, 2023.
- Nurse Practitioners’ 69th National Seminar “Celebrating nurse practitioners: A Vital Link in the Health Care Chain”. July 12, 2023

Dr Douladel Willie-Tyndale

- *Role of the health and care sectors in promoting active ageing, social well-being, and mental health*. Ageing, social well-being, and mental health in the Caribbean: a side event of the Fifth Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons Santiago, Chile, December 13–15, 2022.
- *Selected Case-Based Presentations – Health*. EU-LAC Policy Dialogue on Ageism and Social Inclusion Promotion of the Rights of Older Persons. Virtual Event, July 12, 2023.

Dr Julian McKoy Davis

- *Legislative framework for protecting the health of older adults in Jamaica*. Guest Speaker. UWI School of Physical Therapy Virtual Seminar. June 28, 2023.
- *Preparedness – How do I know that I am Ready?* Guest Speaker. Scotia Pre-Retirement Seminar. June 15, 2023.
- *Ministry, My Pursuits... My Priority*. Guest Speaker. Church of the Firstborn Bible Institute. February 19, 2023
- *Make mental health & well-being for all a global priority*. Panellist. World Mental Health Awareness Day Event. University of Technology, The School of Humanities and Social Sciences. October 10, 2022.
- *Know Dementia, Know Alzheimer’s*. Radio Interview. Let’s Talk Health. NCU Media September 27, 2022.
- *Alzheimer’s Awareness*. Radio Interview. Moment of Hope. Love 101 FM. Aired September 18, 2022

Dr. Kayon Donaldson-Davis

- *Healthy Ageing*. Webinar. Order of St. Luke, Liguanea Chapter, Church of St. Margaret. October 18, 2022.

Dr. Tanya Edwards

- HIV and the Older adult. Radio Interview. Love FM. December 2022.
- *Ageing and Health Issues*. Mona Baptist Church H.E.L.P. Ministry. May 9, 2023
- *Dementia: Signs and symptoms and management*. Radio Interview. NCU FM. June 6, 2023.
- *COVID-19: Precautions to be taken to avoid contracting the disease*. Radio Interview. RJR 94 FM. July 24, 2023.

AGILITY**INCOME GENERATION**

No new grants were obtained over the review period.

Projects

MAWC is exploring avenues to fulfil our co-funding obligations under the existing Technical Cooperation Agreement with the IDB. We are engaging potential donors and sharing the vision to generate stakeholder interest and obtain financial commitment. The prospects are promising.

Research Projects

The Centre is awaiting disbursement of funds from the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Jamaica to support data collection activities for the study on “Breast Cancer Burden and Screening Strategies in Jamaica”. The research grant of \$1.5 million dollars was awarded to Dr Kayon Donaldson-Davis in 2019. The project was approved by Mona Campus Research Ethics Committee.

The Centre has received a commitment (and is awaiting disbursement of funds) from the Ministry of Health and Wellness to support its Midlife (age 40–59) Study on Health, Work and Retirement Planning in Jamaica. Funding is through the Ministry’s Research for Wellness Fund and Professor Denise Eldemire-Shearer is the project’s Principal Investigator. We intend to collect data electronically in the field. This will be a first for MAWC on a large study. Preparatory work for electronic data capture is underway.