



UWI

ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

CCHSRD Newsletter

“Better Health Systems...Healthier Lives”

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About this Issue

Contents

Editorial: The Battle Continues: Third Wave, Vaccine Hesitancy and the Infodemic	3
First of Its Kind: Virtual 2020 National Health Research Conference: A Success	6
Winners Row: Young Researchers Shine at National Conference	11
Honouring Professor David I. Picou: 2020 Lifetime Achievement Research Awardee	15
Report: The UWI-STA Committee on Vaccine Efficacy	18
Virtual Symposium: COVID-19 Vaccine Preparedness - The Healthcare Worker Edition	21

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Editorial

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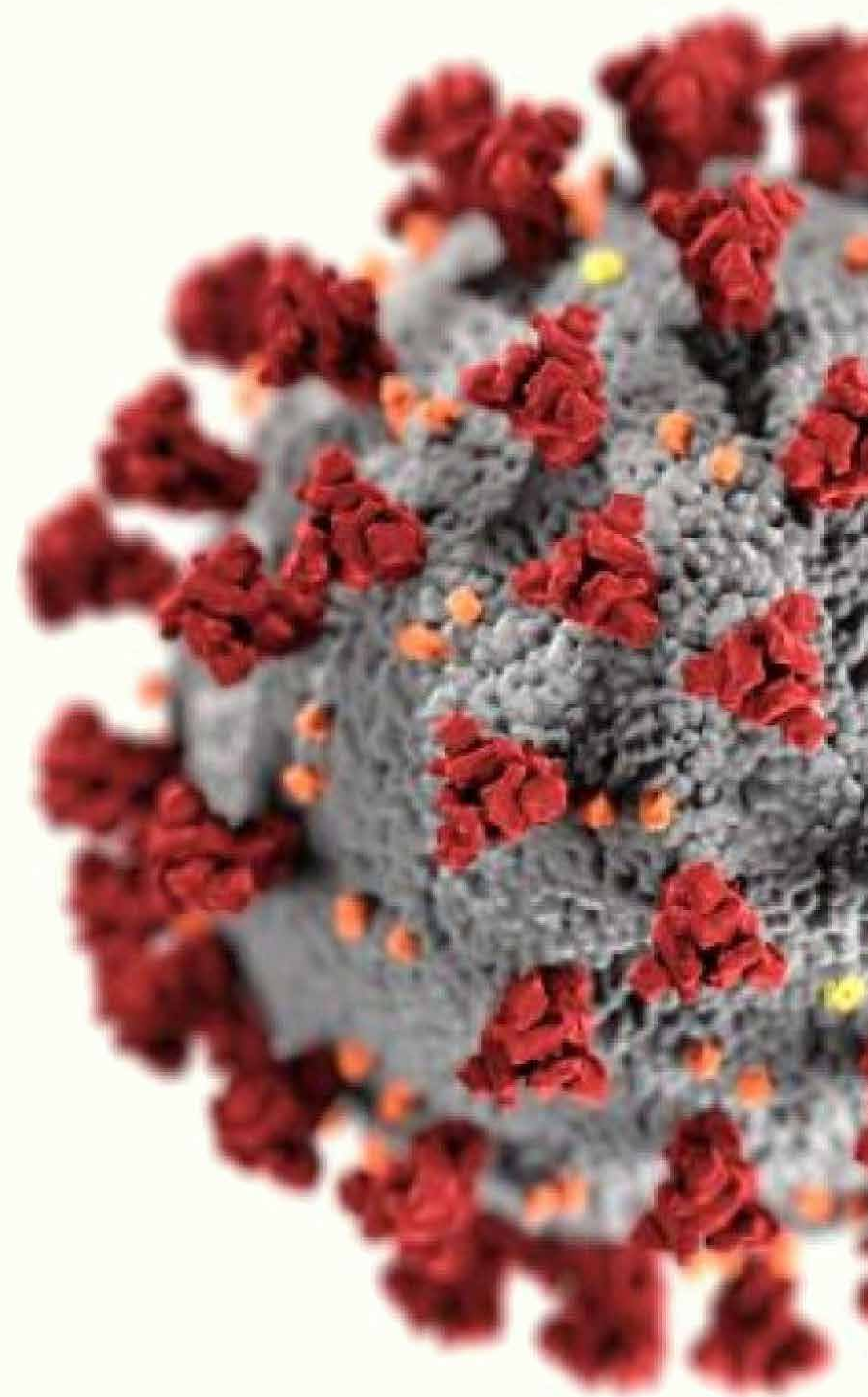
Virtual Symposium: COVID-19
Vaccine Preparedness - The
Healthcare Worker Edition

EDITORIAL

The Battle Continues: Third Wave, Vaccine Hesitancy and the Infodemic

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to dominate health and social discourse globally, and the Caribbean is no exception. As was the case in Jamaica recently, Trinidad and Tobago is going through a third wave of infections, with record numbers of newly infected persons and deaths. The reasons for this are likely to be related to COVID fatigue with large sections of populations inconsistently adhering to the public health and social measures that have proven to be very effective in managing the spread of this disease such as hand washing, social distancing and mask wearing. There is therefore a clear need for more creative messaging as the public is not as receptive as before. Additionally, there should be improved communication of data related to the disease. It is important that the facts be presented to the population in an understandable, transparent and credible manner so as to maintain public confidence.

The presence of SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern is also likely to be contributing to the third wave being experienced in some Caribbean countries. Research is ongoing to identify other variants, but the UK (B.1.1.7), South African (B.1.351) and Brazilian (P.1) variants have been identified in the Caribbean and are known to be more infectious than the original strain of SARS-CoV-2. This is related to increased viral loads over a longer period of time in infected persons.



The Battle Continues: Third Wave, Vaccine Hesitancy and the Infodemic

The implications of their presence on issues such as vaccine effectiveness, public health and social measures and duration of isolation and quarantine are still being researched.

Another reason for the third wave in the Caribbean is the low rate of vaccination. Indeed, the availability of vaccines is expected to make the difference in our management of COVID. The impact of having large percentage of the population (over 70%) vaccinated on decreasing symptomatic and asymptomatic infections, severe disease, hospitalization and death from COVID has been clearly documented in countries such as the [UK](#) and [Israel](#). We need such vaccine-derived herd immunity to be able to reopen our economies and social sectors. The absence of face-to-face classes in primary and secondary schools continues to result in a significant number of our at-risk children falling further behind. As a tourism-dependent region, the pandemic continues to adversely affect our economies. Thankfully, all Caribbean countries have begun to vaccinate their populations. However, it is not clear how many would achieve herd immunity within the next 12 months due to both the unavailability of vaccines and uptake hesitancy. Securing adequate supplies of vaccines has been very challenging for Developing countries. Not only is the cost of some of the vaccines prohibitive but some developed countries have pre-purchased many more doses than they require to vaccinate their populations. For example, the USA has purchased 1.8 billion doses even though its population is 329 million. This situation, along with growing vaccine nationalism, has led to the Director General of the World

Health Organization to call on G-7 nations to follow the example of the USA and support a temporary waiver of COVID-19 vaccine patent protections. It is important that no country is left behind in the global fight against this disease.

Vaccine hesitancy can be defined as the delay in acceptance or refusal to take vaccines despite their availability. Sadly, survey results have indicated an increase in vaccine hesitancy in many Developing countries such as Trinidad and Tobago. The gravity of the situation led to the establishment of a Task Force comprising academics from the Faculties of Medical Sciences and Social Sciences at The UWI, St Augustine to prepare a report entitled '*COVID-19 Vaccines: Addressing Hesitancy and Uptake in Trinidad and Tobago*'. The report, which addressed the myths and misconceptions surrounding the vaccines and strategies to address them, was recently presented to that country's Minister of Health to support their COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. One of the issues highlighted in the report was the need for more Caribbean research into the role of social issues such as religion and culture on vaccine hesitancy.

Vaccine hesitancy (and the control of the pandemic, in general) is driven to a great extent by the current infodemic (information epidemic), which is characterized by the overburden of information. This is promoted by the rapid and widespread sharing of messages and viewpoints through the various

The Battle Continues: Third Wave, Vaccine Hesitancy and the Infodemic

social media and has been playing a devastating role in creating mistrust in science, government policies and society as a whole. [A recent publication in Nature](#) highlighted the challenges faced in promoting factual vaccine messages on social media in the face of the more strategic approaches taken by anti-vaxxers. This has resulted in greater attention being paid to the emerging field of infodemiology with the hosting of [conferences](#) as well as [training courses](#) in infodemic management. There is a need for Caribbean research in this area as evidence-informed strategies are urgently needed to counter the mis- and dis-information by the increasingly aggressive anti-vaccine movement as well as to leverage the use of various electronic media to educate and inform the public. It is critical that we develop the capacity of citizens (self-efficacy) across populations to appraise the content that they receive if we are to effectively manage the infodemic.

In this Issue of the CCHSRD Newsletter, we highlight the timely Symposium entitled 'COVID-19 Vaccine Preparedness – The Healthcare Worker Edition'. This was hosted in February 2021 in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Trinidad and Tobago to provide healthcare workers with key information about COVID-19 vaccines. We also highlight the very successful Inaugural National Health Research Conference of Trinidad and Tobago that was held in November 2020. Notably, due to its success, planning has started for the hosting of the 2021 edition as the key stakeholders have agreed that it should be an annual event.

Stay safe, continue to practice the 3Ws (wash hands, wear a mask, watch your distance) and enjoy the articles in this Issue of our Newsletter.

- Donald T. Simeon (Professor)

Director, Caribbean Centre for Health Systems Research and Development



Editorial

First of Its Kind: Virtual 2020 National Health Research Conference: A Success

Winners Row: Young Researchers Shine at National Conference

Honouring Professor David I. Picou: 2020 Lifetime Achievement Research Awardee

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Virtual Symposium: COVID-19 Vaccine Preparedness - The Healthcare Worker Edition

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First of Its Kind

Virtual 2020 National Health Research Conference: A Success

- Ms Nikisha Headley
Clerical Assistant, CCHSRD

The inaugural National Health Research Conference of Trinidad and Tobago was hosted on November 19-20, 2020. Following the success of The UWI Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS) Research Day the previous year, Professor Terence Seemungal, Dean, FMS, invited partner institutions to collaborate in the hosting of a national conference. The latter facilitated the dissemination of indigenous health research findings for use in the development of policies, guiding clinical practice and programming and the strengthening the country's health system. The collaborating institutions included those involved in the production and use of health research i.e. the Ministry of Health, Regional Health Authorities, Tobago House of Assembly, University of Trinidad Tobago and University of the Southern Caribbean. The theme for the Conference was *"Advancing Health Research in Trinidad and Tobago"*.

2020
NATIONAL
HEALTH
RESEARCH
CONFERENCE

Partners

This Conference was made possible through the support of our multi-sectoral partners and sponsors. Thank you.

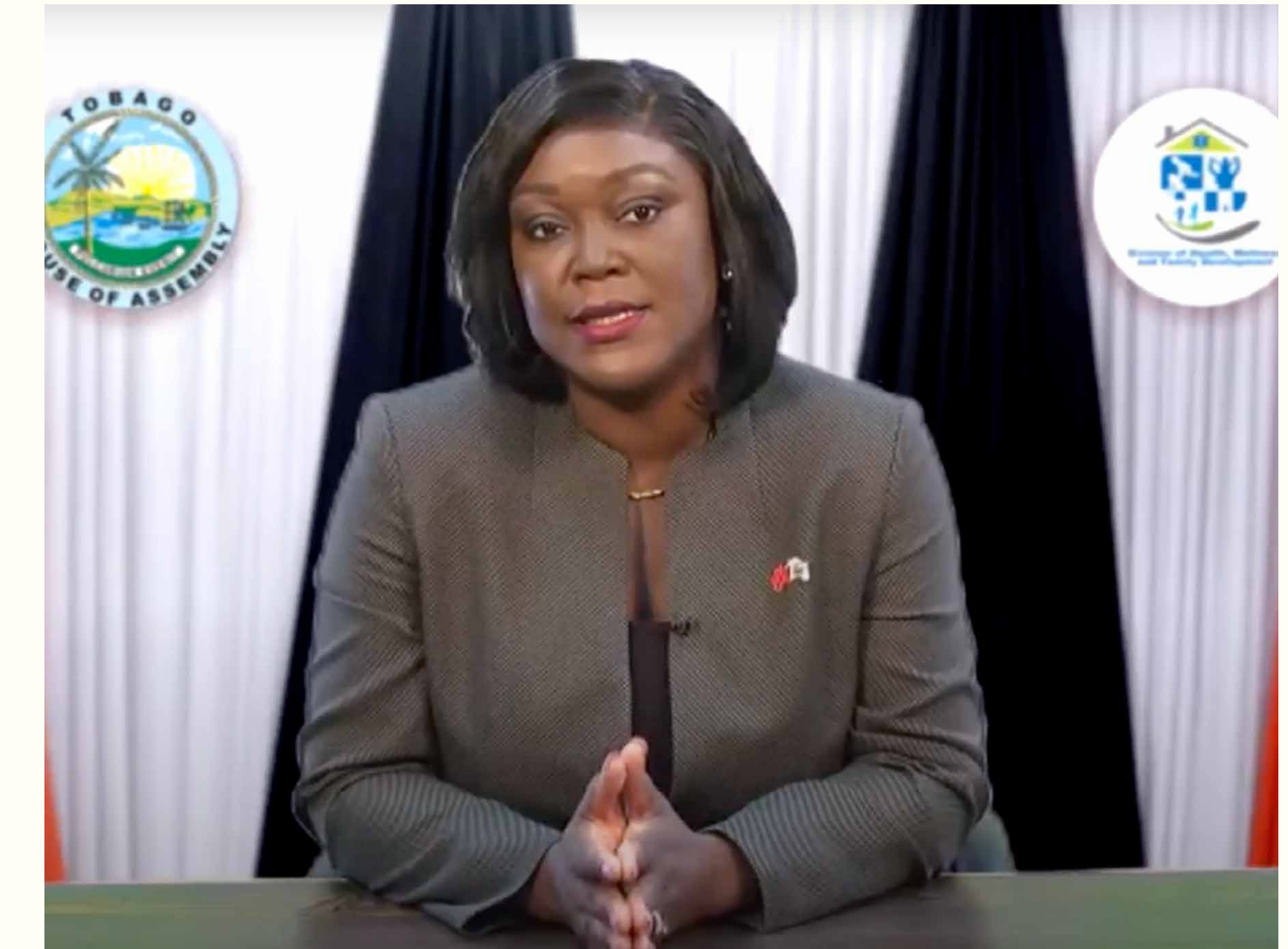


Virtual 2020 National Health Research Conference: A Success

The Planning Committee was chaired by Professor Donald Simeon, Director of the CCHSRD and comprised representatives from each of the collaborating institutions. Its Scientific Sub-committee selected 120 research papers for oral or poster presentation, covering a wide range of areas including Non-Communicable Disease (NCDs); Infectious Diseases; Clinical Studies; Mental Health; Veterinary and Dental Health; Health Systems; Social Sciences and Innovations in Health. The abstracts were published in a Supplement of the Caribbean Medical Journal.

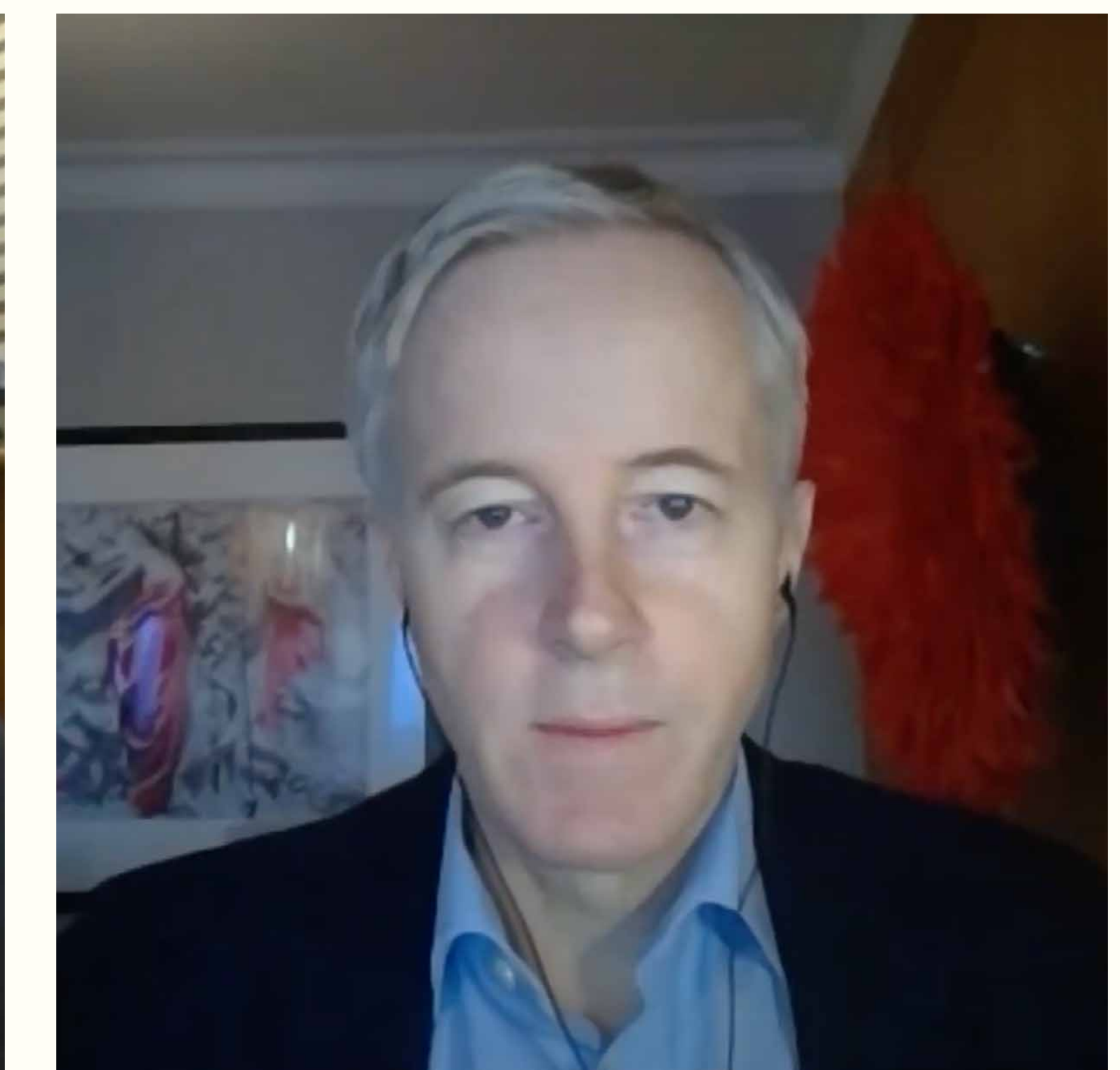
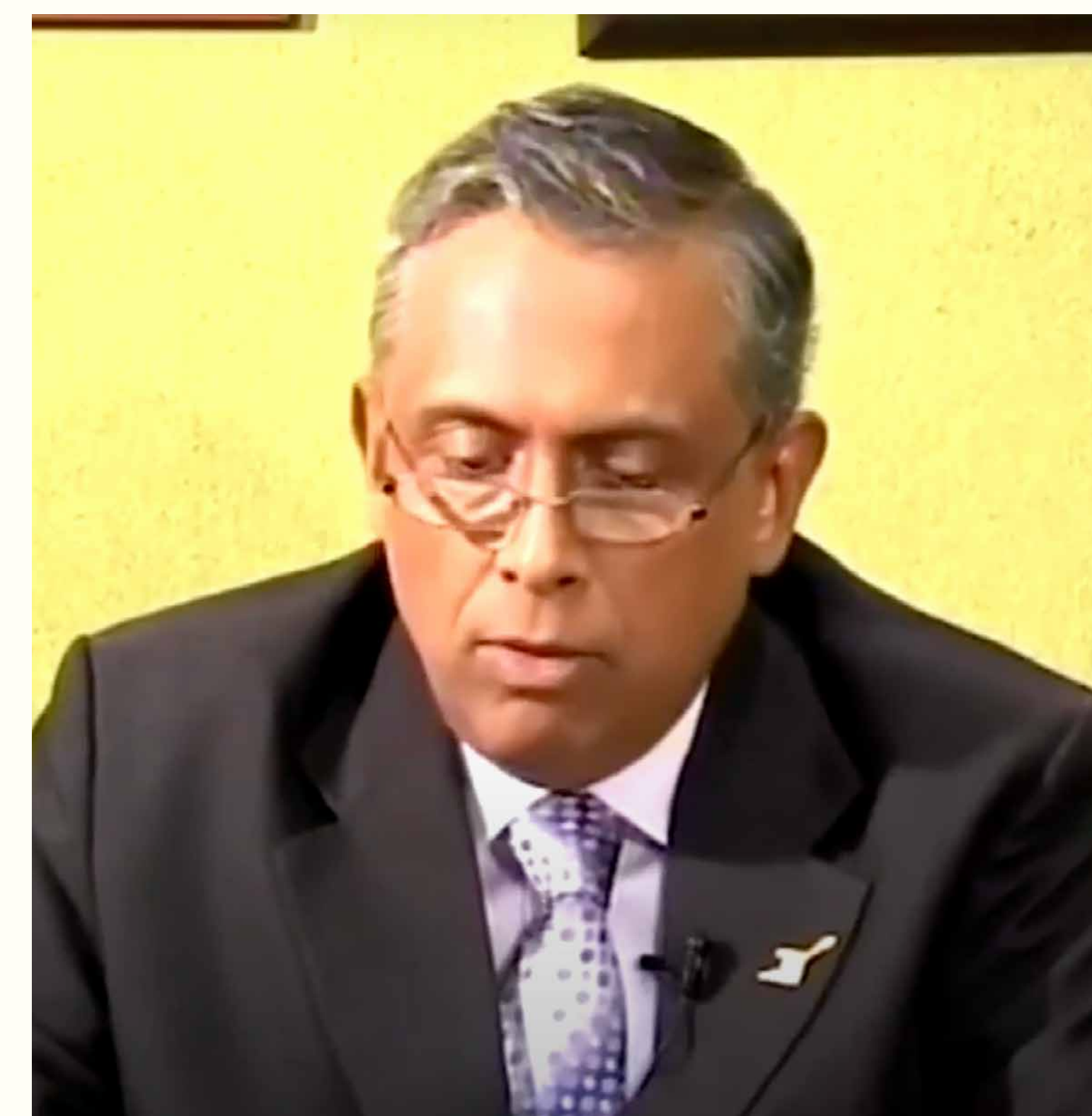
The Conference was initially scheduled for March 26 2020 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Port of Spain but had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The format was also changed as the Conference was pivoted to the virtual Hubilo platform, which was used for the streaming of presentations and to facilitate interaction among participants. An innovative 3-dimensional virtual poster hall was designed for the poster presentations. The opening and closing ceremonies were streamed live and open to the public, while the oral presentations and access to the 3-D poster hall were restricted to registrants.

The Honourable Minister of Health of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr Terrence Deyalsingh delivered the welcome address and Professor John Lavis, Director, Mc Master Health Forum, was the international guest speaker at the Opening Ceremony.

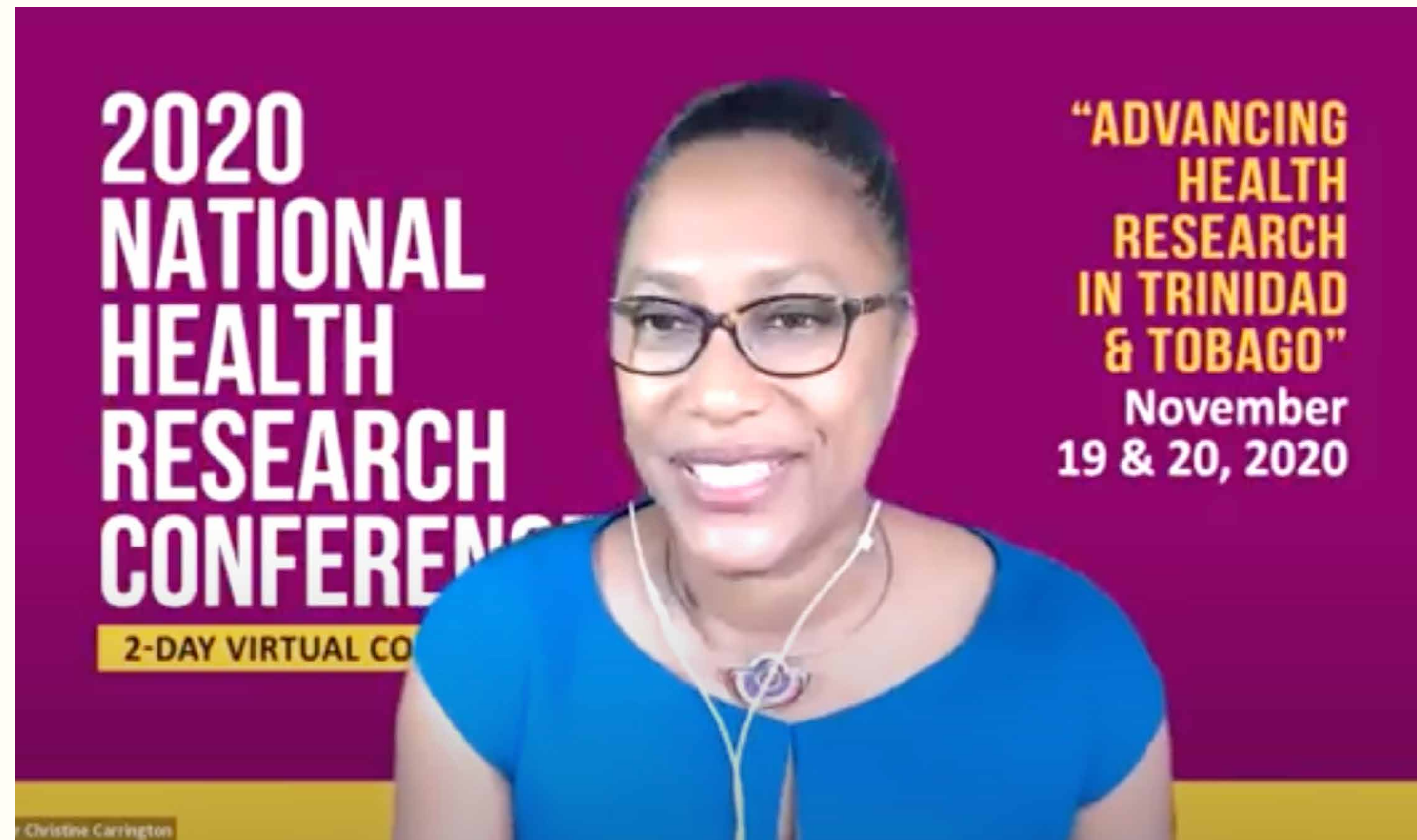


(Above) The Honourable Terrence Deyalsingh, Minister of Health, Trinidad and Tobago and Councillor Tracy Davidson-Celestine, Secretary of Health, Wellness and Family Development, Tobago House of Assembly delivering their opening remarks.

(Below) L-R: Professor Terence Seemungal (The UWI) and Dr Paul Edwards (PAHO/WHO) delivering remarks; and Professor John Lavis (Mc Master Health Forum), the International Guest Speaker



Virtual 2020 National Health Research Conference: A Success



(Above) Prof. Christine Carrington (The UWI), Feature Speaker on Day 1 of the Conference.

(Below) Prof. Gerard Hutchinson (The UWI), Feature Speaker on Day 2.



He presented on *"Using Synthesised Research Evidence to Inform the COVID-19 Response"*. The other Feature Speakers were Professor Christine Carrington, Professor of Molecular Genetics and Virology, FMS, UWI on *"Viral Disease Emergence: We Reap what We Sow"* and Professor Gerard Hutchinson, Professor of Psychiatry, FMS, UWI on *"The Burden of Trauma: Mental Health as Public Health."*

The Conference comprised pre-recorded oral presentations followed by live Q&A sessions. It ended with a Closing Ceremony that included the awarding of prizes and the announcement of Lifetime Research Awardee, Professor David I. Picou.

[*Read more about the prize winners on Pages 11-14 and Professor Picou on Pages 15-17.*](#)

The 2020 National Health Research Conference has

set the standard for the hosting of virtual conferences. Expectations are high as stakeholders eagerly anticipate the 2021 edition.

The Conference was supported by several sponsors, including Trinidad and Tobago Moves (Ministry of Health), Transform Global Health, Roche Pharmaceuticals, Medical Marketing Company Limited, Caribbean Heart Care Medcorp Ltd., The UWI, University of the Southern Caribbean and Caribbean Health Foods Limited.

First of Its Kind

Virtual 2020 National Health Research Conference: A Success



(Top Row) Left: Session Moderator, Ms Marsha Ivey (The UWI) with some of the oral presenters during one of the live Q&A sessions | Right: Ms Navida Bachan (South West Regional Health Authority - SWRHA) and Ms Ivey on set following an oral presentation session.

(Bottom Row) L-R: (i) Dr Ashton Rogers (University of Trinidad and Tobago), Ms Bachan (SWRHA) and Prof. Donald Simeon (CCHSRD) during a break; (ii) Prof. Gerard Hutchinson (The UWI) with session moderator, Prof. Edward Clarke (University of the Southern Caribbean) on set; and (iii) a few members of the Conference Planning and Implementation Teams.



Editorial

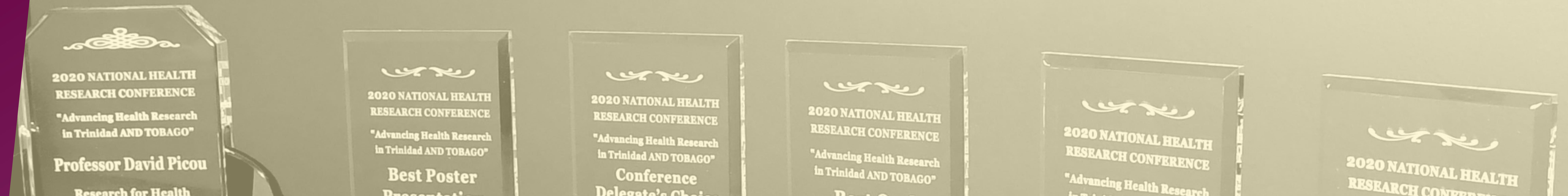
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Winners Row

Young Researchers Shine at National Conference

- Ms Kershelle Barker
Junior Fellow, CCHSRD

The Virtual 2020 National Health Research Conference featured over 30 oral presentations and over 70 posters, all highlighting pertinent research on topics including COVID-19, non-communicable diseases, clinical studies, veterinary health, health systems and more.

To culminate the exciting two-day Conference, Professor David I. Picou was honoured with the Lifetime Research Award, and five prizes were awarded to the top presentations in different categories.



Young Researchers Shine at National Conference

A panel of judges scored each presentation on its methodology, results, conclusions, significance to the field and delivery of presentation (oral) / professional writing (posters)

...and the winners were:



Vaginal Candidiasis and Associated Risk Factors among Pregnant Women from Trinidad and Tobago

K Ashraph, C G Unakal, P E Akpaka, A M Kurhade

This observational study found a high frequency of vaginal candidiasis among both symptomatic and asymptomatic pregnant women attending antenatal clinics at hospitals across Trinidad and Tobago.



Cafeteria Diet-Induced Obesity Results in Impaired Cognitive Functioning in a Rodent Model

AR Lewis, S Singh, FF Youssef

The study characterized the progression of physiological and behavioural outcomes in rodents following chronic consumption of a cafeteria (CAF) diet. Results showed that a chronic CAF-diet induced obesity and promoted behavioural changes such as cognitive impairments and increased anxiety levels.

Young Researchers Shine at National Conference



on behalf of C Hosein, G Joseph, S Sharma, S Singh

The Creation of a Strip Test Which Can Be Used to Monitor Blood Sugar Levels in Diabetics Using Tears

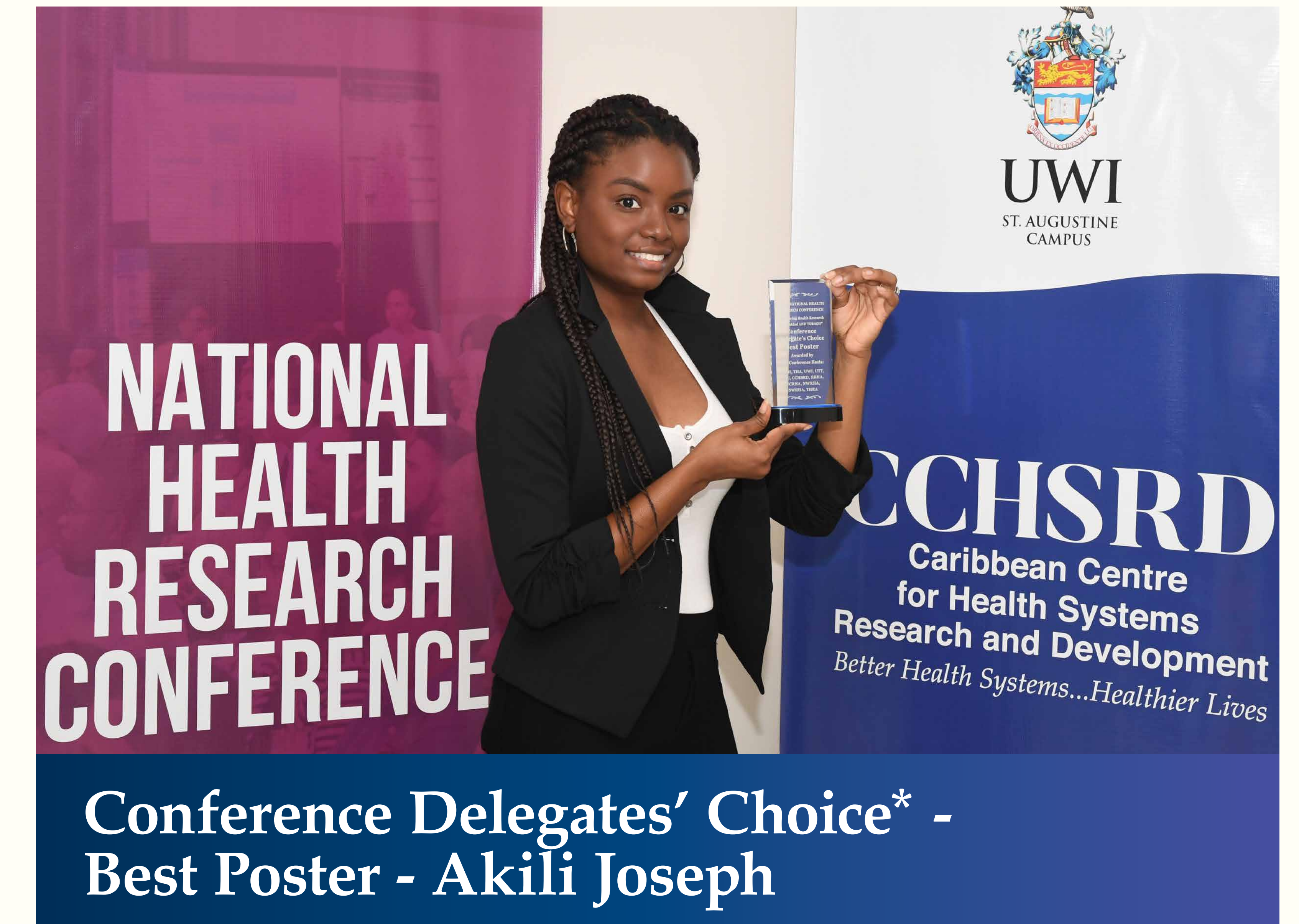
This study aimed to create a non-invasive method of monitoring blood glucose levels in diabetics, specifically a strip test using tears. Results revealed this may not be possible at this time, but may be developed with advancements in technology.



Differential Associations of Adipose Tissues with Hypertension and Diabetes in Tobago Men

C Tilves, AL Kuipers, JM Zmuda, JJ Carr, JG Terry, Nair, S Peddada, CH Bunker, V Wheeler, I Miljkovic

This study examined associations of visceral and subcutaneous adipose tissue of the abdomen (ASAT) and thigh (TSAT) with cardiometabolic diseases. They found significant and opposing associations between TSAT and ASAT with hypertension in Tobago men.



on behalf of A Joseph, W Elibox, R Haraksingh

Whole Exome Sequencing Reveals Potential Genetic Contributors to Monogenic Diabetes Mellitus in Trinidad

This study sought to curate a large cohort of DNA samples of diabetic patients in Trinidad. Results indicated there may be novel genetic contributors to monogenic diabetes mellitus in Trinidad, and further investigation was ongoing.

*For this prize, attendees were asked to select which they thought was the best poster.

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Honouring Professor David Ivan Picou: 2020 Lifetime Achievement Research Awardee

Honouring Professor David Ivan Picou, CMT BS MB BS PhD

Lifetime Achievement Research Awardee, 2020 National Health Research Conference

- Shelly-Ann Hunte
Research Fellow, CCHSRD



Professor David Picou was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Research Award at the Inaugural Trinidad and Tobago National Health Research Conference in 2020. Click [here](#) to view his acceptance speech. His contributions to research at the National, Regional and International level were colossal. We provide highlights of his career below.

SNAPSHOT OF PROFESSOR DAVID PICOU'S CAREER

— NOTABLE RESEARCH AWARDS

1986 - PAHO/WHO Medal

For interest, involvement and contribution to the development of health research in the region of the Americas

1995 - Commonwealth Caribbean Medical Research Council Award

For outstanding service to medical research in the Caribbean

2002 - The Caribbean Chief Medical Officers

For 47 years service to Caribbean health and as Director of Research, Caribbean Health Research Council

2019 - Caribbean Institute for Health Research Award

In recognition of outstanding leadership in the pioneering years of the Tropical Metabolism Research Unit (TMRU) to advance research and policy for addressing severe, acute childhood malnutrition

Honouring Professor David Ivan Picou, CMT BS MB BS PhD

— KEY PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Consultant / Expert for the following International Organizations for over 40 Years:

- World Health Organization, Geneva
- Pan American Health Organization, Washington, DC, USA
- Food & Agriculture Organization, Rome
- Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED), Geneva

— PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS - INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

- Picou D, Alleyne GAO, Kerr DS, Miller C, Jackson A, Hill A, Bogues, Jacqueline P, and Patrick, John.
Malnutrition and Gastroenteritis in Children: A manual for Hospital Treatment and Management (1975). Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute, Kingston.
- Alleyne, George AO, Hay RW, Picou David IM, Stanfield JP and Whitehead RG
Protein Energy Malnutrition (1977). Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd, London.

— KEY LEADERSHIP ROLE – HEALTH RESEARCH

1973-1980 - Professor of Experimental Medicine and Director, Tropical Metabolism Research Unit, UWI, Mona, Jamaica

1962-1988 - Scientific Secretary, Commonwealth Caribbean Medical Research Council (CCMRC)

1988-2002 - Director, CCMRC and the Caribbean Health Research Council

*Prof. Picou speaking at
The UWI Medical Alumni
Conference, 1995*



(Left) Professor David Picou (left) representing the Commonwealth Caribbean Medical Research Council (CCMRC) at PAHO's Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting, 1975



(Right) Scientific Secretaries, Professors Alan Jackson (left) and David Picou (right) representing the CCMRC at the Pan American Conference for Health Research Policy in Caracas, 1982

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The UWI-STA Committee on Vaccine Efficacy

- *Professor Yuri Clement, PhD*

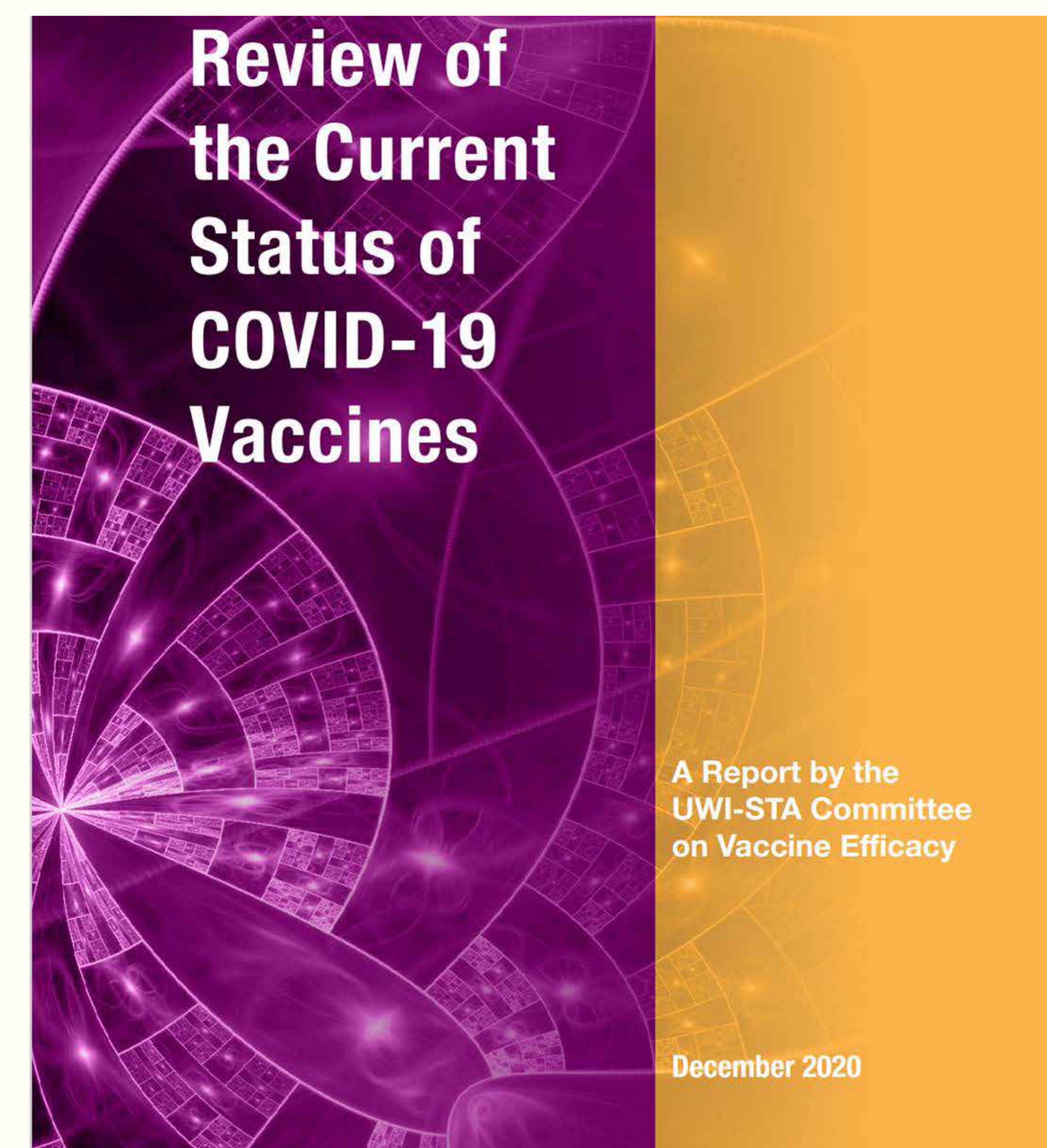
Professor of Pharmacology, Faculty of Medical Sciences, The UWI, St. Augustine

In December 2020, the Dean (FMS) appointed an ad-hoc Committee on Vaccine Efficacy. The Committee critically assessed the published data regarding efficacy and safety, as well as storage requirements for these vaccines.

Two approved mRNA vaccines, (BioNTech/Pfizer (BNT162b2) and Moderna mRNA 1273) have efficacy of 95% and 86.4% respectively. The approved Oxford/Astra Zeneca (ChAdOx1 nCov-19) vaccine has efficacy of 62.1% and can be stored in the refrigerator. These vaccines were shown to have good safety profiles and are delivered in two doses. However, the duration of protection of these vaccines remains unknown.

Rare occurrences of anaphylactic-like reactions associated with mRNA vaccines raise the concern whether individuals with prior allergic reactions should receive this type of vaccine.

Other approved vaccines include Russian-manufactured Sputnik V/Gam-COVID-Vac and EpiVacCorona, with little reported clinical evidence. The approved BBIBP-Cor vaccine (Sinopharm, China) is reported to have efficacy of 86%, with little published data.



The UWI-STA Committee on Vaccine Efficacy



Large multinational trials are almost complete for the single-dose Johnson&Johnson/Janssen Ad26.COVS vaccine, which can also be stored in the refrigerator. The Novavax vaccine is another promising candidate currently in large multinational trials. Other trials are ongoing to include specific subpopulations, such as children under 16 years old and pregnant women.

With the rollout of vaccines in Trinidad and Tobago it was crucial that strategies be put in place beforehand to build trust and counter the significant “anti-vaxxer” sentiment. Additionally, post-vaccination surveillance protocols must be established to ensure public safety.

The report was shared with Trinidad and Tobago’s Chief Medical Officer, and is being used by the National Immunization Technical Advisory Group to guide the preparation for the roll out of the vaccines.

This committee was chaired by Professor Yuri Clement and included Dr Carla-Maria Alexander, Dr Maritza Fernandes, Dr Stanley Giddings, Ms Shelly-Ann Hunte, Dr Diane Ignacio, Ms Marsha Ivey, Dr Satish Jankie, Dr Michele Monteil, Dr Philip Onuoha, Dr Shalini Pooransingh, Ms Avril E. Reid and Mrs Shurla Sampson-Francis.

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Virtual Symposium

COVID-19 Vaccine Preparedness - The Healthcare Worker Edition

- Mr Michael Pierre, Ms Alissa Moore
Research Assistants, CCHSRD

The Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health held an interactive virtual symposium on Sunday 7th February, 2021. The theme was *“Overcoming vaccine skepticism and hesitancy and strategies to optimize uptake”* and the target audience was health care workers. A blended format was used with most of the panellists and a few of the over 600 participants attending face-to-face at the Auditorium, New School of Dentistry Building, FMS. The majority of the participants attended online using Zoom.

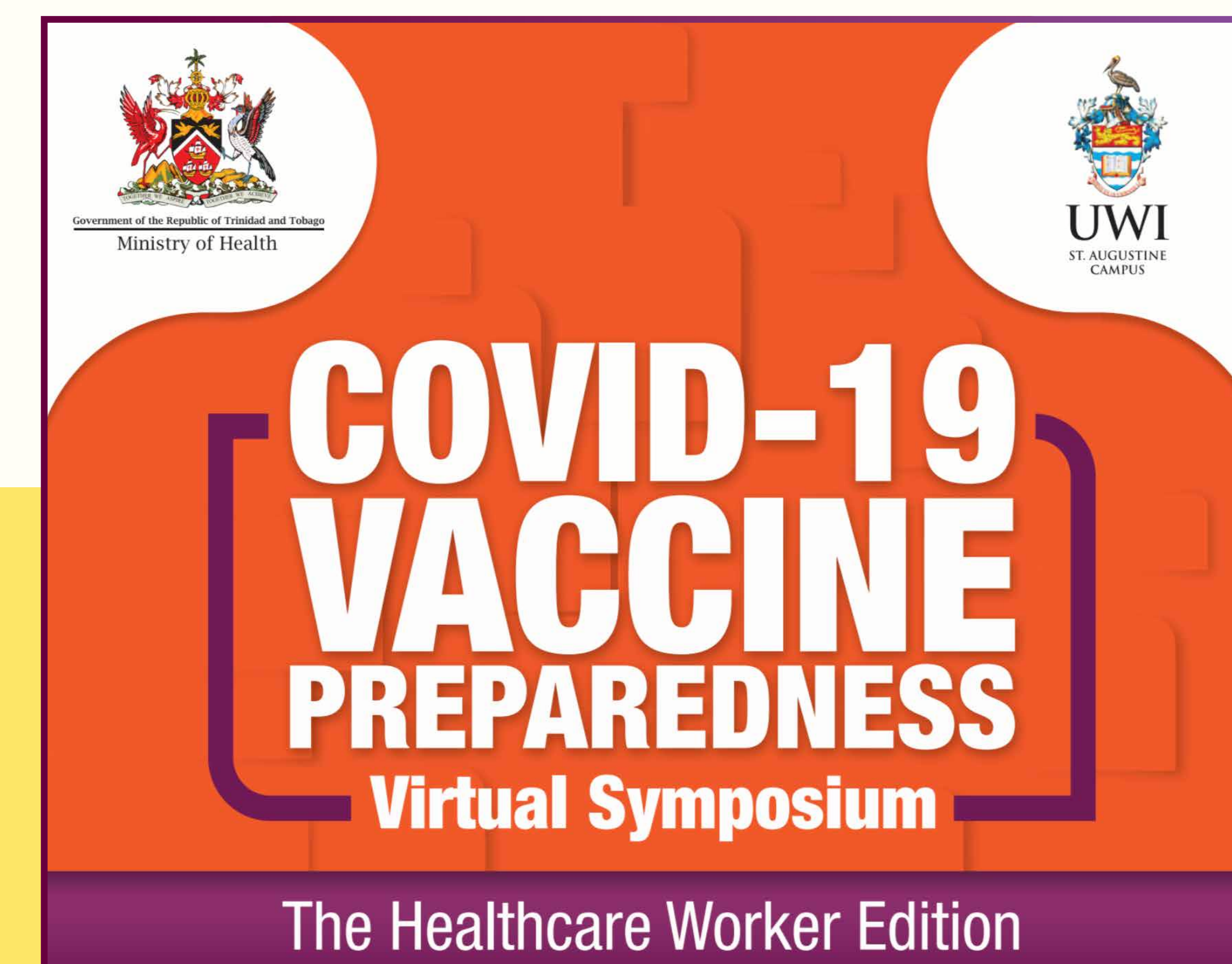
The health care workers who participated reported that the Symposium was timely and they congratulated the seven panellists on quality of their presentations.

The Symposium was recorded and shared with other health professionals and students who were unable to attend.

The Symposium was moderated by Professor Donald Simeon (Director of the CCHSRD), and there were seven presentations.

Missed the Symposium?
View the Recording Here

(or see [Pages 23 & 24](#) for Key Messages
from the presentations)



COVID-19 Vaccine Preparedness - The Healthcare Worker Edition



Professor Christine Carrington
Professor of Molecular Genetics and
Virology, FMS, The UWI
**Infectious Disease Molecular
Epidemiology for Pathogen
Control & Tracking (IMPACT):
SARS-CoV-2 Genomic
Surveillance**

The evolution of the SARS-CoV-2 virus was explained. It was noted that viruses have high mutation rates and some of the mutations are significant as it relates to human disease.

The COVID-19 IMPACT project had been developing local capacity for rapid generation of SARS-CoV-2 whole genomes so that viral genomics and related molecular epidemiological approaches could be incorporated into COVID-19 mitigation and control efforts. Prof. Carrington's team had analyzed samples from 11 CARICOM countries, including 165 sequences with 28 distinct lineages. The UK, South African and Brazilian variants of concern had been found in five of these countries, with evidence of local spread in two.

Implementation of the project was about to be scaled up.



Dr Carla-Maria Alexander
Lecturer in Immunology,
FMS, The UWI
**Vaccine Development and
Approval: Safety and Efficacy**

An overview was presented of component and whole vaccines, including those developed for COVID-19. They consist of an antigen/active component accompanied by excipients that assist in making sure the vaccine is a stable and viable product. To ensure the safety of vaccines, they undergo a pre-clinical trial stage, followed by three clinical trial stages where demographics and sample sizes are increased. Subsequently, the vaccine product is taken to a regulatory board for approval for general public use. This process includes analysis of vaccine efficacy as well as side effects. Immunised persons are also monitored for Adverse Events following immunisation.

Dr Alexander also clarified the conditions that led to the quick development of COVID-19 vaccines, including factors such as increased funding; previous coronavirus research; unprecedented worldwide co-operation and sharing of scientific knowledge; steps conducted in parallel as opposed to sequentially; and timely independent reviews of data and reports. She also described the range of COVID vaccines, their platforms, countries that approved their use, side effects and efficacy.



Dr Erica Wheeler
PAHO/WHO Country Representative
**COVAX Facility: COVID-19
Vaccine Distribution**

Dr Wheeler presented an update on COVAX objectives, timelines, progress and responsibilities.

COVAX is a coordinated mechanism to provide equitable access to vaccines in participating countries. It was established to support the largest actively managed portfolio of vaccine candidates globally; deliver COVID-19 vaccines as quickly as possible (2 billion doses by the end of 2021); guarantee fair and equitable access to vaccines for all participants; and end the acute phase of the pandemic in 2021.

To date, nine vaccines are part of the COVAX portfolio, and 172 countries have expressed interest in participating in the COVAX mechanism. The critical role to be played by PAHO's Revolving Fund for Access to Vaccines was highlighted. As well as the role of PAHO/WHO vs. that of the countries. Vaccination delivery will target 20% of the population including frontline workers in health and social care settings, high-risk adults and other priority groups.



Dr Roshan Parsaram
Chief Medical Officer,
Ministry of Health, T&T
**Ministry of Health's Readiness
to Receive and Distribute the
COVID-19 Vaccine**

Trinidad and Tobago was allocated an initial 100,000 to 120,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine via the COVAX Facility, which should be delivered in March 2021. AstraZeneca, a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine, has proven to be effective and this initial allocation would provide vaccines for at least 50,000 persons.

The Ministry of Health, Trinidad and Tobago (MoH) has identified sites for COVID-19 vaccine storage, and initial distribution would occur throughout the country. Distribution would be facilitated by the Regional Health Authorities. Health Visitors and Registered Nurses were being trained in the storage, handling and administration of the vaccine. The MoH was "far advanced" in its preparation to receive and distribute the vaccine locally.

Virtual Symposium

COVID-19 Vaccine Preparedness - The Healthcare Worker Edition



Dr Bidyadhar Sa
Deputy Dean, Quality Assurance & Accreditation and Head, Centre for Medical Sciences Education (CMSE), FMS, The UWI

Acceptance and Public Attitudes of COVID-19 Vaccine in Trinidad and Tobago

The Johns Hopkins studies had found that COVID-19 Vaccine acceptance in Trinidad and Tobago decreased between July 2020 (51%) and November 2020 (41%). This prompted the present study to determine and identify factors associated with vaccine acceptance and attitudes in T&T.

Data were collected from 1102 adults identified using snow-ball sampling via social media websites. Only 38% of respondents indicated that they would accept the vaccine. Their main reasons for non-acceptance were being worried vaccines safety (41%) and vaccines effectiveness (22%). Only 25% of the respondents had taken the flu vaccine during the previous 12 months.

They found that age, education, ethnicity, religion and employment status were predictors of willingness to accept the vaccine.



Dr Daniel Solomon
Clinician Educator in Infectious Diseases, Brigham and Women's Hospital and Instructor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School

Overcoming Vaccine Skepticism and Hesitancy: Strategies to Optimize Uptake

Dr Solomon used case studies to demonstrate the 5 C's of vaccine hesitancy. These include Continuum of Vaccine Acceptance (ranging from never takers to always takers); Convenience (vaccine availability, affordability and accessibility); Complacency (value to the individual); Confidence (effectiveness and safety of the vaccines, trust in the health system and policy makers); and Context (cultural beliefs, socioeconomic inequalities).

Practical tips were also offered such as: Make the vaccine as convenient as possible for the target audience; Assess where the population is on the acceptance continuum; Explore why they are where they are; Ask permission to share information; Share clear consistent information, stories and data; and Engage the right messengers.






Dr Mike Campbell
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Social and Ethical Issues Related to the Rollout of the COVID-19 Vaccines: Myths vs. Reality

Dr Campbell shared the three primary roles of the ethical allocation of vaccines: reduction of morbidity and mortality; minimization of economic and social impact; and reduction of inequality by prioritizing the most vulnerable. It was noted that COVID-19 had highlighted health inequities resulting from discrimination, healthcare access and utilisation, occupation and education.

One key to achieve acceptance is the reach of the religious community, such as among Muslims and Rastafarians who tend to be hesitant regarding vaccines. Vaccine programmes should aim to promote legitimacy and to understand context and historical events of society through the engagement of community leaders.

In the Next Issue:



The Faculty of Medical Sciences, The Faculty of Social Sciences & the Caribbean Centre for Health Systems Research and Development (CCHSRD)

VIRTUAL PUBLIC FORUM

COVID-19 Vaccines: Truths and Untruths



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