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CCHSRD

Caribbean Centre for Health Systems
Research and Development

Better Health Systems...Healthier Lives

CCHSRD Newsletter

“Better Health Systems...Healthier Lives”

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Editorial

2021 National Health Research Conference: An Outstanding Exhibition of T&T Research

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EDITORIAL

The recent virtual hosting of Trinidad and Tobago's Second Annual National Health Research Conference during the pandemic must be applauded. There were several COVID-19 papers – a clear indication that local researchers responded positively to their responsibility for the timely generation of evidence for use by decision-makers. In his feature speech at the Opening Ceremony, the country's Minister of Health expressed his gratitude for this support towards the development of policies to manage the pandemic.

The hosting of national health research conferences was promoted as a good practice in the [Health Research Policy for the Caribbean](#). The latter was developed by the Caribbean Health Research Council (CHRC) in 2009 and included strategies for the strengthening of national health research systems towards the production and uptake of health research. Since then, countries such as Jamaica and The Bahamas and more recently, Trinidad and Tobago have been hosting such conferences. In addition to sharing local research findings with stakeholders who are well placed to use them to support policymaking, programming and clinical practice, these conferences have a critical role in building capacity among junior researchers and bolstering the national research culture.



Prof. Donald T. Simeon at the 2021 T&T National Health Research Conference

Institutions such as the Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED) have long identified robust national health research systems (NHRS) as being critical to improve health and promote equity in Developing Countries. Given their importance, it is unfortunate that there have been no recent NHRS assessments in the Caribbean. It may therefore be useful to share some brief reflections on the situation.

There are five primary functions of effective health research systems: Governance and Management; Financing; Knowledge Generation, Utilization and Management; and Capacity Development. A very useful indicator of good national governance and management of health research is the presence of research ethics committees (RECs). There has been significant progress in the establishment of RECs in the Caribbean in the last two decades. Most countries have Committees to review research and the [Bioethics Society of the English-speaking Caribbean](#) (BSEC) and the Caribbean Network of Research Ethics Committees (CANREC) have been providing excellent support.

National funding for health research has always been a challenge for Caribbean countries and a recent [publication that addressed its determinants](#) revealed that the situation has not improved. COHRED had identified a role for Governments. They proposed that at least two percent of national health budgets should be ring-fenced to fund 'essential' research. This was promoted in the Caribbean but there was no evidence of its implementation. Consequently, there were several initiatives involving regional and international agencies to build the grant writing capacity of Caribbean researchers so that they could compete for international funding. It is likely that some researchers benefitted but there was no assessment of the overall impact. An important source of funding for our young researchers was the CHRC Research Grants programme but unfortunately this no longer exists.



The production of health research in the Caribbean has not been insignificant, especially in countries that have university campuses. The challenge continues to be how to incentivize researchers so that they address the problems that our countries face. A review of papers presented at conferences over the last few years would reveal that many addressed non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which have been the most important health conditions in the Region. As mentioned earlier, there have also been many studies addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in the last year. These are positive signs but there is still a need for increased dialogue between researchers and policy makers to define the research agendas.

Caribbean countries are not unique in their historical challenges related to research uptake. Knowledge management had not been prioritised. The Caribbean Centre for Health Systems Research and Development (CCHSRD) was established in 2018 to work with stakeholders at the national and regional levels to address this gap. CCHSRD has been making progress with support from the [Knowledge to Policy Center](#) and through the [Partnership for Evidence and Equity in Responsive Social Systems](#) (PEERSS) project but it will take time before its impact is fully felt across the Caribbean.

There have been few assessments of the needs and supply of research capacity in Caribbean countries. It is often believed that the conduct of research is the responsibility of academics at universities who are expected to have the requisite training and motivation. However, all health professionals should be empowered to conduct essential research that would enable them to generate the evidence to address the challenges they face daily. Between 1994 and 2012, research skills

workshops were hosted throughout the Caribbean and targeted professionals in Ministries of Health. This training was complemented by mentorship. The feedback was very positive, and these professionals subsequently presented their research at annual conferences. It might be timely for one of our Regional Institutions to relaunch this capacity development strategy.

It is felt that the increased appreciation for research during the COVID-19 pandemic could result in rejuvenated national health research systems. Driven by the urgent need for evidence by policymakers and health practitioners, there are reports of multi-sectoral collaborations at the national, regional, and international levels that resulted in increased research funding, capacity development, productivity, and uptake. This augurs well for Caribbean countries but there is a need for leadership at the national and regional levels. Institutions such as The University of the West Indies have a critical role to play.

I end by recognising excellence in research. Several Caribbean health researchers were named in the two percent most influential scientists in the world [over their careers](#) as well as [in 2021](#) in lists compiled by Stanford University using criteria such as the impact of their publications. I extend hearty commendations to our research leaders. I also salute the prize winners at Trinidad and Tobago's Second Annual Health Research Conference, in particular Professor Vijay Naraynsingh for his Lifetime Achievement Award. He has had, and continues to have, a sterling research career. Congratulations!

- Donald T. Simeon (Professor)

Director, Caribbean Centre for Health Systems Research and Development



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2021 National Health Research Conference: An Outstanding Exhibition of Trinidad & Tobago Research



2021 National Health Research Conference

An Outstanding Exhibition of Trinidad & Tobago Research

- Ms Alissa Moore
Research Assistant, CCHSRD

The Second Annual National Health Research Conference of Trinidad and Tobago was successfully hosted on November 18 and 19, 2021. The success of the Conference was largely due to the effective collaboration of the multi-sectoral partners i.e., the Ministry of Health; Faculty of Medical Sciences & Centre for Health Systems Research and Development, The University of the West Indies (UWI); The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT); The University of the Southern Caribbean (USC); and Regional Health Authorities. The Conference provided a platform to showcase indigenous health research findings that could potentially inform the development of policies, guide clinical practice and programming, and strengthen the country's health system. It was aptly themed *"Building Resilience through Research in a Pandemic"*.

The Planning Committee was chaired by Professor Donald Simeon, Director of the CCHSRD and comprised representatives from each of the partner institutions. Its Scientific Review Sub-Committee selected 74 research papers

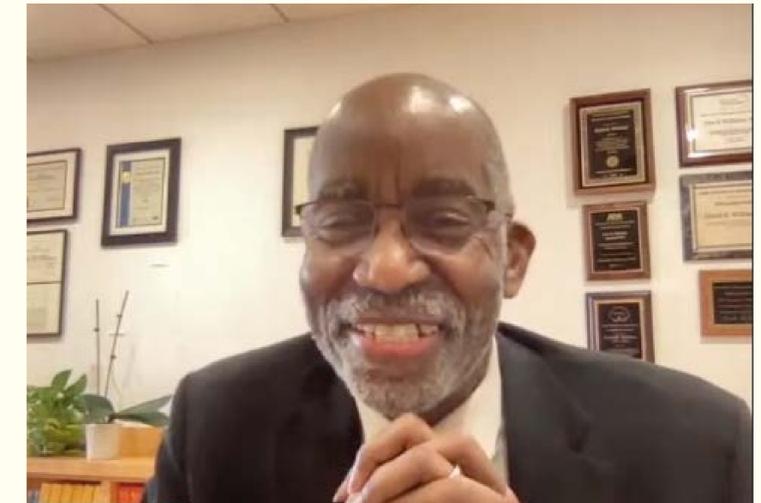


for oral or poster presentation, covering a wide range of topics including COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake and Hesitancy, Adapting to the New Normal, Non-Communicable Diseases, Mental Health, Clinical Studies, Pharmacy, Dentistry/Oral Health, and Laboratory Studies. The abstracts were published in a Supplement of the Caribbean Medical Journal.

An Outstanding Exhibition of Trinidad & Tobago Research

The Conference was hosted using the virtual Hubilo platform, which facilitated the streaming of presentations and interaction among participants. Exciting features on the platform included an interactive chat box during presentations, live news feed for posts and generating polls, direct chat and meeting scheduling among attendees, and lounges for group video/audio conversations. An innovative 3-D virtual poster hall was also designed for the poster presentations. The Opening and Closing Ceremonies were streamed live and were open to the public, while the oral presentations and access to the poster hall were restricted to registrants.

The Minister of Health of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable Terrence Deyalsingh in delivering the welcome address highlighted the need for evidence-based healthcare practice and commended researchers for their invaluable contributions to his Ministry's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Professor David R. Williams, Professor of Public Health and Chair of the Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences Department at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, was the international guest speaker at the Conference. He delivered a brilliant presentation on *"Resilience for Mental Health in the Age of COVID"*. He was highly commended by Conference attendees who appreciated the public health approach to managing mental health. The other Feature Speakers were Professor Christine Carrington, Professor of Molecular Genetics and Virology, The University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine on *"Lessons from SARS-CoV-2 Genetic Surveillance in the Caribbean: What now? What next?"* and Professor Clive Landis, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal, The UWI, Cave Hill, on *"The Triple 'C' Threat to the Caribbean Chronic Disease, Climate Change, and COVID-19"*.



(Above) The Honourable Terrence Deyalsingh, Minister of Health, Trinidad and Tobago delivers the welcome address; and Professor David R. Williams (Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health) fields questions following his feature presentation.

(Below) Feature Speakers, Professor Christine Carrington (The UWI, St. Augustine) and Professor Clive Landis (The UWI, Cave Hill) during their presentations

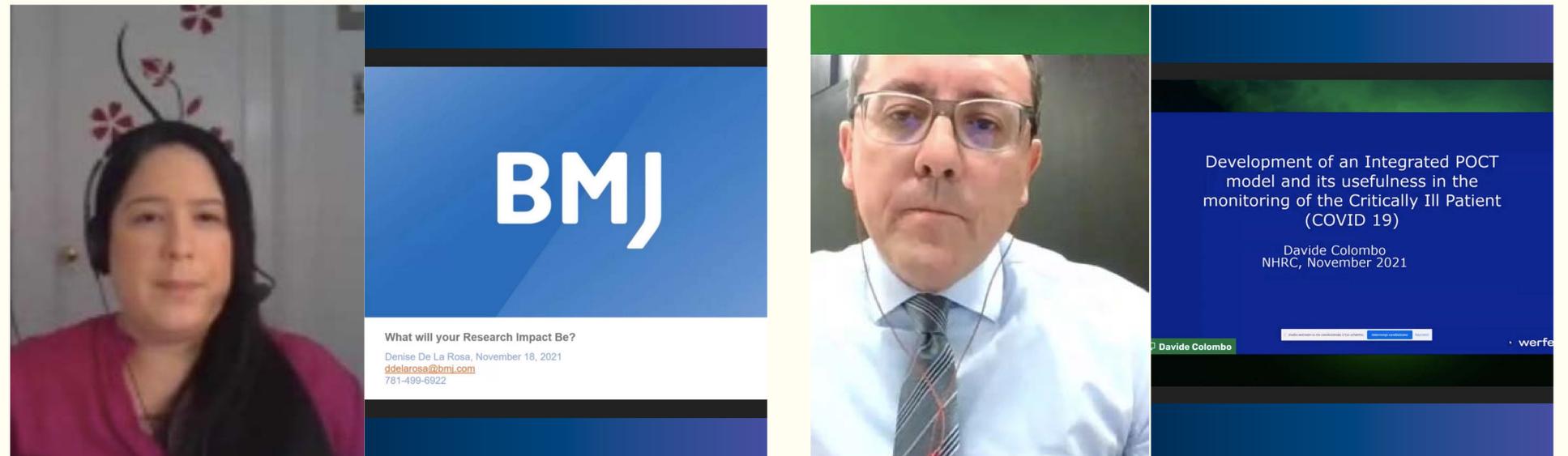


An Outstanding Exhibition of Trinidad & Tobago Research

The two-day Conference comprised pre-recorded oral presentations on timely local research, with an impressive number of presentations by student researchers. Each of the eight sessions was followed by live Q&A when the presenters fielded questions from Conference attendees.

The Conference was supported by two Diamond Sponsors: British Medical Journal (BMJ) and Medical Marketing Company Limited (MMCL). BMJ's Denise De La Rosa delivered a talk on increasing research impact in which she offered practical information to attendees seeking to publish research. Davide Colombo presented on behalf of MMCL and spoke on the development of their Integrated Point of Care Testing Model and its Contribution to Critical Patient Monitoring for COVID-19.

The Conference also featured a Webinar on "Sustaining Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice through an Evidence-Based Approach in a Pandemic". This was hosted by a consortium comprising The University of the West Indies (St. Augustine and Mona campuses), University of Illinois in Chicago and Duke University.



(Above) Left: Denise De La Rosa (BMJ) and Davide Colombo (on behalf of Medical Marketing) during their sponsored talks.

(Below) L-R: Professor Terence Seemungal (Dean, Faculty of Medical Sciences, The UWI); Dr Colwick Wilson (President, University of the Southern Caribbean); Professor Prakash Persad (President, University of Trinidad and Tobago); and Professor Brian Copeland (Principal, The UWI, St. Augustine) bring remarks from their respective universities during the Opening Ceremony.

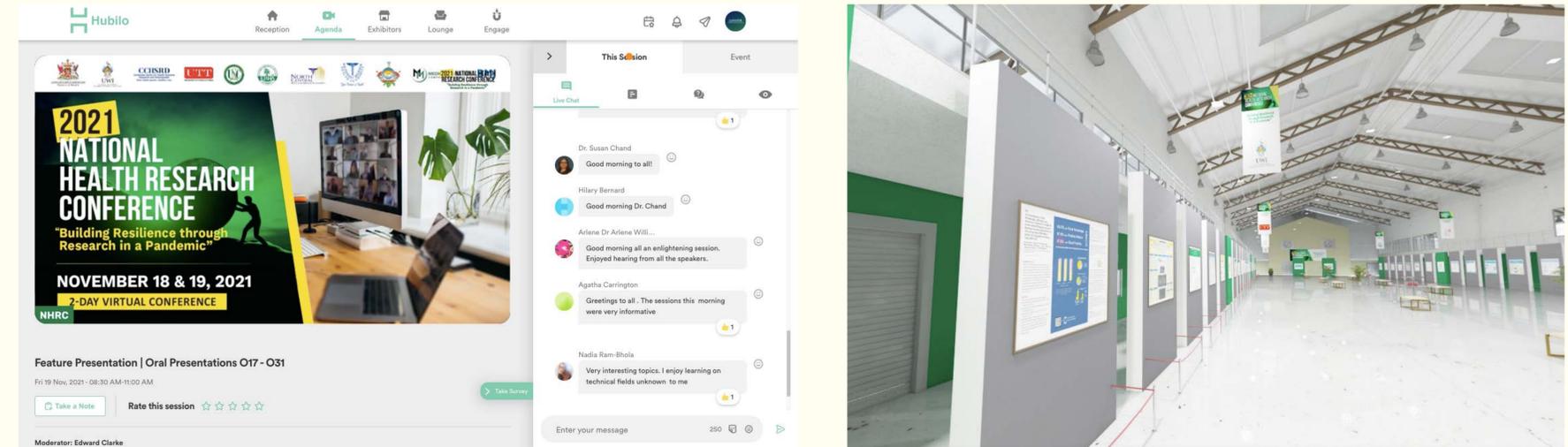


2021 National Health Research Conference An Outstanding Exhibition of Trinidad & Tobago Research

To bring the curtains down on another successful Conference, the Closing Ceremony included the awarding of research prizes and an acceptance speech by the Lifetime Research Awardee, Professor Vijay Naraynsingh.

Read more about the prize winners on Pages 11-14 and Professor Naraynsingh on Pages 15-19.

The 2021 National Health Research Conference was exceptionally well executed, raising anticipation for the 2022 edition.



(Above) A look at the virtual platform used for the 2-day Conference; and the 3D Poster Hall.

(Below) L-R: Research for Health Lifetime Achievement Awardee, Prof. Vijay Naraynsingh gives his acceptance speech; Dr Stewart Smith (Ministry of Health) and Prof. Donald Simeon (CCHSRD) during a break; and some members of the Planning and Implementation Teams of the Conference.



Left: Session Moderator, Prof. Edward Clarke (USC) with some of the oral presenters during one of the live Q&A sessions;

Right: Dr Samantha Glasgow (UTT) moderates one of the sessions on Day 1.



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Researchers Awarded at National Health Research Conference

- Ms Kershelle Barker
Junior Fellow, Evidence Synthesis, CCHSRD

The 2021 Trinidad & Tobago National Health Research Conference featured 74 oral and poster presentations of quality research on COVID-19, non-communicable diseases, clinical studies and more.

The enlightening two-day virtual Conference culminated with an Awards Ceremony at which Professor Vijay Naraynsingh was honoured with the Research for Health Lifetime Achievement Award. Additionally, five prizes were awarded to the top conference presentations in different categories.

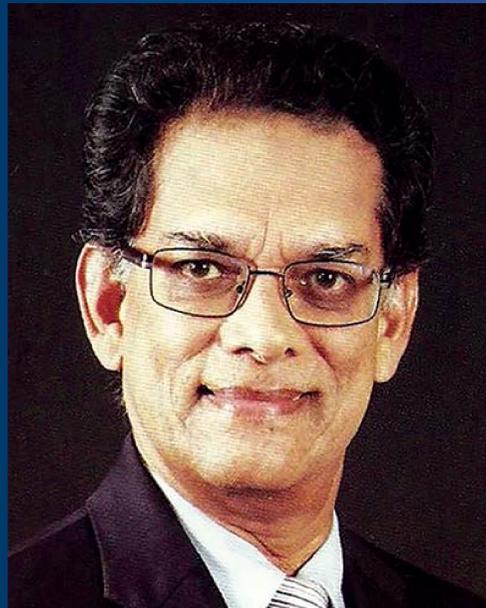


Best of the Best

Researchers Awarded at National Health Research Conference

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

...and the winners were:



**Prof Vijay Naraynsingh
Lifetime Achievement Award**

2021 National Health Research Conference

Read an Interview with
Professor Naraynsingh on Pages 15-19.



**Early Career Researcher Prize
Dr Nikita Sahadeo**

(O32) Genomic Surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 in the Caribbean
NSD Sahadeo, V Ramkissoon, S Hill, A Brown-Jordan et al.

She reported on the development of capacity and incorporation of viral genomics into the COVID-19 response. SARS-CoV-2 genomic sequencing was implemented and over 1,000 samples from 17 Caribbean countries were sequenced. Variants of concern were identified and the data were used to strengthen mitigation and control efforts in the Caribbean.



**Student Researcher Prize &
Best Oral Presentation
Mr Timmy Ramnanansingh**

(O36) Non-invasive Measurement of Microvascular Function to Determine Age-Related Differences
T Ramnanansingh, S Singh, J Johnson, S Rocke, V Sundaram, C Carrington, J Addae

Copping two awards, this study analysed spectral composition of blood flow in rats, to examine age-related changes in parameters that are caused by different aspects of microvascular control in the skin. The level of control of cutaneous microcirculation and the changes associated with ageing were determined using continuous wavelet analysis.

Researchers Awarded at National Health Research Conference



**Best Poster Presentation
Dr Candice Sant**

on behalf of C Sant, C Oura, K Georges

(P14) A Review of the Epidemiological Analysis of the Malaria Burden in Latin America and the Caribbean from 2010 to 2020

This study was a narrative synthesis which found an increase in malaria cases in Latin America and the Caribbean between 2010 and 2020. As malaria is not endemic to most Caribbean countries, highly sensitive diagnostic methods should be used for continuous malaria surveillance in countries near to Venezuela, Brazil, and Colombia.



**Conference Delegates' Choice* -
Best Poster - Ms Halimah Mohammed**

on behalf of H Boodram, I Hosein, H Mohammed, J Mohammed, I Montserin, I Ogir, I Oguneme, I Segulam, C-M Alexander

(P1) An Investigation of the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Specific COVID-19 Public Health Regulations and Precautions Among Students of The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus (The UWI STA)

In this study, an online survey was conducted with students at The UWI, St. Augustine campus, to assess their knowledge, attitudes and practices toward specific COVID-19 public health regulations and precautions. Almost 90% of participants exhibited good knowledge

and over 95% exhibited positive attitudes, but more than 50% had poor practices, indicating need for improvement in the latter.

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



Double Prize Winner, Timmy Ramnanansingh receives his award from Prof. Donald Simeon, Director, CCHSRD

[Read more about Mr Ramnanansingh's study on Pages 20-22.](#)

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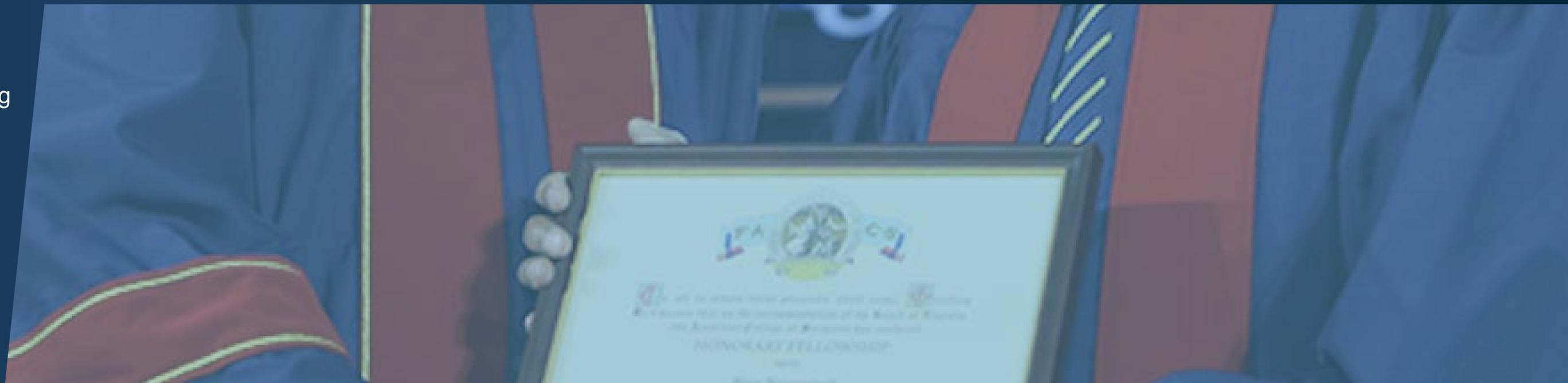
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10 Questions with Professor Vijay Naraynsingh Trinidad & Tobago's 2021 Research for Health Lifetime Research Awardee

- *Mr Akil Williams*

Junior Fellow, Evidence Synthesis, CCHSRD

Professor Vijay Naraynsingh is a Trinidad and Tobago national, UWI Professor Emeritus of Surgery and an expert in vascular surgery who has produced a remarkable body of innovative research over a 38-year career. His research continues to significantly benefit patient care and outcomes in Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean and beyond. Professor Naraynsingh has 343 publications in peer-reviewed journals, contributed to five surgery textbooks, established Doctor of Medicine (DM) programs at The UWI St. Augustine and has delivered over 150 presentations at regional and international scientific and professional meetings.

Professor Naraynsingh was awarded the Research for Health Lifetime Achievement Award at the Second Annual Trinidad and Tobago National Health Research Conference in November 2021.

[Click here to view his acceptance speech and continue reading for an exclusive interview.](#)



Trinidad & Tobago's 2021 Research for Health Lifetime Achievement Awardee

1 What were your thoughts when you were informed that you would be the Research for Health Lifetime Achievement Awardee at the 2021 National Health Research Conference?

"I was genuinely surprised because I never had awards as a goal. In all the years of conducting research and writing, awards do not come to mind, and they have not been a part of my agenda. My agenda has just been to do the things that excite me and to write about the things I find interesting."

2 What propelled you to pursue a career in research?

"I have always had a natural curiosity. My interest was research first, even before surgery. Initially I did not want to be a surgeon because I thought surgery did not have the capacity for research, so I considered medicine

or paediatrics where I believed there would be more opportunities for research. Funny enough, my first research was on Gastroenteritis in Trinidad. I was an intern during the outbreak in 1974 and because of my curiosity I wanted to find out why this outbreak was taking place and why our people [were] dying."

3 What was the most significant/defining moment during your research career?

"There are many diverse aspects of a career in surgery like defining new ways of doing procedures, operations and identifying new clinical signs to make a diagnosis. Therefore, it will be difficult to say a single thing. There are many dramatic things that have happened – like doing the first limb replantation without having done or read about one before. That surgery

took 13 hours to complete but at the end of it, the patient's hand worked again! We did a couple of those limb replantations and published them.

Another dramatic moment was being called upon to reattach a severed penis, which was something I had never seen before. So, there are certainly dramatic things that happen in surgery that may have been technical and not research related. However, we were able to publish those dramatic events because surgery affords you the opportunity to publish a lot of things that are unusual."

4 What are your most significant research findings/ achievements and why do you rate them so highly?

"There are a few that are pretty remarkable. For example, when there is an obstructed intestine, a colon, you can do an ostomy to empty the intestine

externally, so stool won't build up in the intestine. I designed the technique where you can actually suck out the contents of the intestine and make it flat and soft again where it is no longer distended like a balloon, and you will be able to stitch the large intestine and fix it. This technique was published and it was a well-cited paper.



Prof. Narayansingh performing the first kidney transplant in Trinidad and Tobago, operating with Dr Lempert of New York

Trinidad & Tobago's 2021 Research for Health Lifetime Achievement Awardee

We were also able to identify nine new clinical signs. A very simple one was the Slipping Slipper Sign (SSS), something that never existed in the world literature before. I came upon the SSS while walking on a concrete path from the beach in Mayaro; my wet rubber slippers continued to slip off my feet. This got me thinking... if someone had diabetes and they couldn't feel the soles of their feet because of lack of sensation and fine movements of the toes, the slippers would slip off their feet and they wouldn't notice. When I came back home, I started asking patients (who had injuries and infected diabetic feet) questions, and a lot of them had the SSS. It was the first time in the world literature the SSS was identified and what we found subsequently was that SSS was a marker for other diseases as well. Now I can speak to a diabetic on the phone and know that they have diabetic neuropathy without seeing them; I just ask them if they have the SSS."



5 How do we go about producing more researchers like Professor Naraynsingh?

"I think we must get them started from young, in other words getting junior persons like interns and medical students involved in research. I think there must be at least 100 persons who have written their first paper with me, and I believe seeing their names published in print for the first time gets them excited and they begin to look for new ideas and some of them come and even ask me, 'What else can we

work on?' Therefore, it is important to engage juniors in research when they are young, curious, and excited, because it then has the potential to become self-generating."

6 How can we attract young doctors to choose a research career?

"What we can do is get persons who are already clinicians and pre-clinicians involved in research; this is an easier way. However, in the Caribbean, we don't have many career researchers, or positions and funding for career researchers. This problem has persisted even while I was at the Caribbean Health Research Council and the Commonwealth Caribbean Medical Research Council. Ultimately, in the Caribbean presently, research is not an appealing career because of the lack of big grants and funding to sustain a career researcher."

7 What advice do you give to early career researchers?

"Have a good mentor. I believe a strong guru-student relationship can provide an early career researcher with much guidance and they can learn a lot. In clinical research, there is probably not much of a need for a mentor, however, in non-clinical career research, a mentor will be particularly valuable.

Career researchers must make a special effort to ensure that they train young researchers to do research. I have been lucky to have great mentors like [Professor David] Picou. I remember as a Fellow in Vascular Medicine at the Mayo Clinic, one of my mentors flew to New York to watch me give my first international presentation. That's the kind of mentorship, I have strived to give my juniors. I have flown all over the world just to see my juniors' work."

Trinidad & Tobago's 2021 Research for Health Lifetime Achievement Awardee

8 What key skills and competencies do you try to impart to them?

“Firstly, I try to get the junior to understand how I am thinking about a problem and the many different angles of thought to address a problem and the nuances involved with doing a project. For example, in designing a study, what questions we want to ask and answer. When designing a study, I spend quite some time with the junior, working on the questions we want answered, because if you develop your dataset properly you can answer multiple questions. In fact, we conducted a study not too long ago where we were able to generate seven publications because we clearly defined all the parameters we wanted to investigate. I encourage the juniors to have ideas and to discuss those ideas.

Finally, I try to meet frequently with my juniors. I remember every Tuesday afternoon I would meet with whoever

I was doing research with and inquire where they were at.”

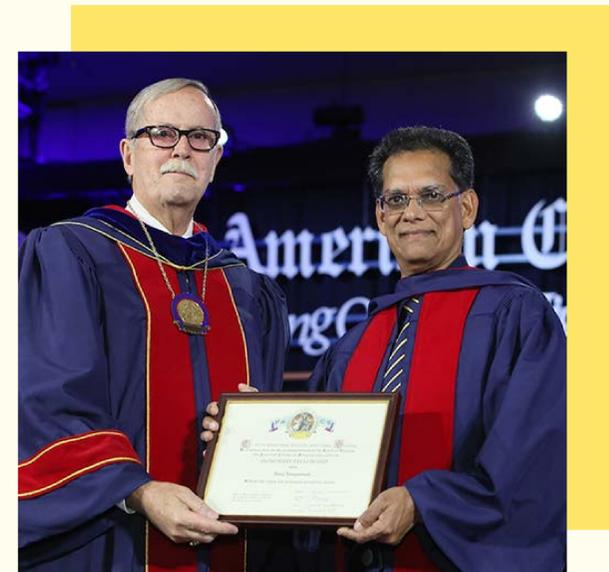
9 Are there enough research mentors around today?

“I think there are enough gurus (research mentors). However, there has been a little cultural shift where the guru must seek students to mentor, whereas before the students would seek out the gurus. Once the guru understands this, it will not be difficult to manage.”

10 How can we increase the uptake of research into clinical practice and policy?

“Unfortunately, policymaking is driven more by politics than research in areas such as health management. I am not

saying that there aren't aspects of policy that have not been driven by research. The reality is there is a substantial gap between what is known and what is being done when developing policy and I believe that it is mostly politically motivated and not due to a shortage of information. This is due to the truths that we (researchers) know may not be palatable politically and therefore those truths are not guiding policy.”



Prof. Naraynsingh receiving an Honorary Fellowship in the American College of Surgeons

What's next for Prof. Naraynsingh?

“Since retiring from The UWI seven years ago, I have continued teaching and I have more time to do more research, writing, reading both non-surgical and surgical literature, and surgery. I still operate a lot because I love surgery. I created a YouTube channel called “[Surgery with Prof. Naraynsingh](#),” to teach young surgeons about surgeries they are unable to experience due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Taping, narrating and editing the videos have been fun. We currently have 34 videos on the channel with six more videos to be edited and uploaded.”

Thanks Professor, for sharing your experiences and advice as well as for your sterling contributions to health research and surgery.



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Research Highlight

Non-Invasive Measurement of Microvascular Function to Determine Age-Related Differences

- Mr Timmy Ramnanansingh

Department of Pre-Clinical Sciences, Faculty of Medical Sciences

The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine

(Winner of the Student Researcher and Best Oral Presentation Prizes at the 2021 T&T National Health Research Conference)



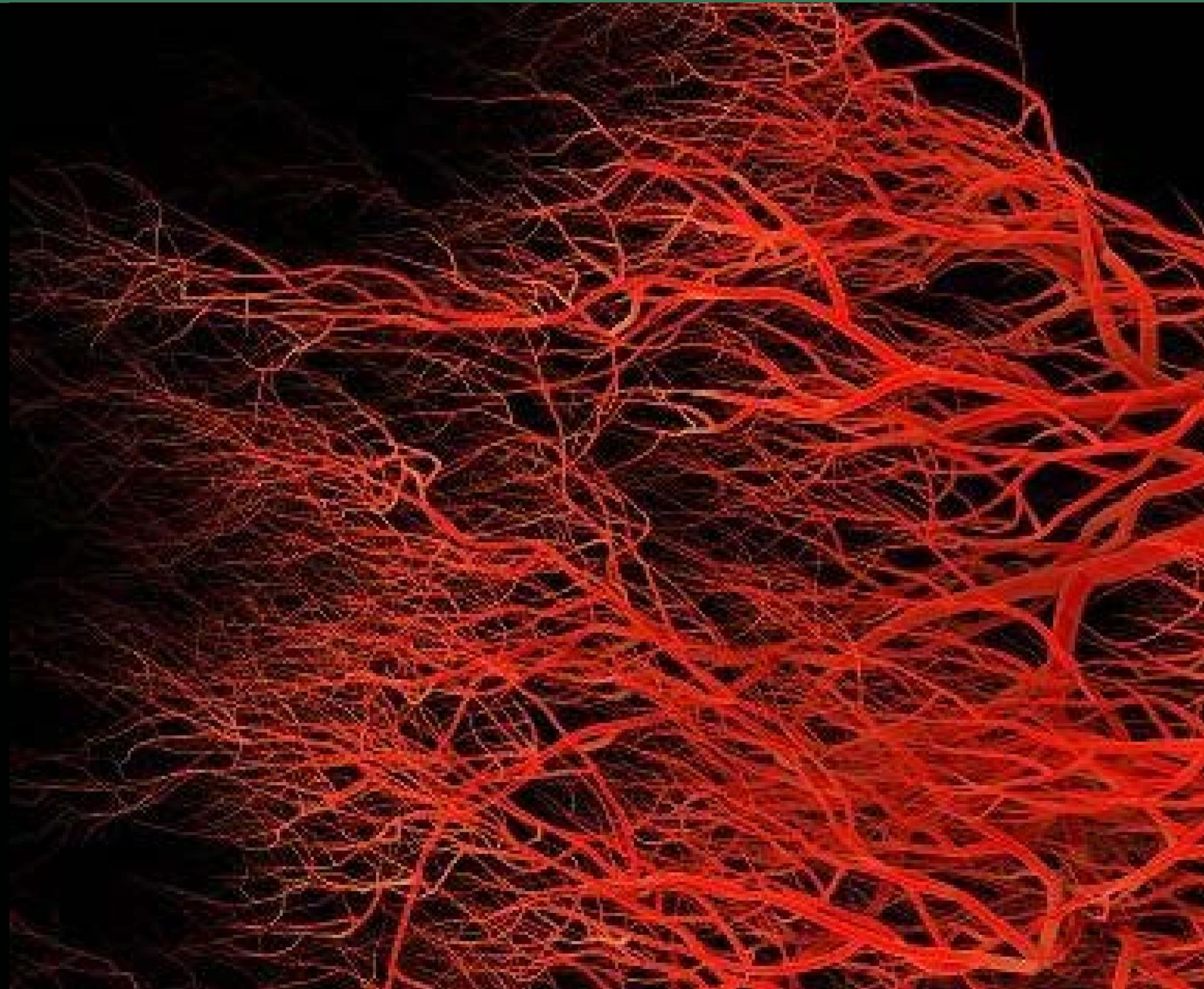
Discussions surrounding the state of the cardiovascular system often revolve around heart and large vessel health. If we have an *Apple Watch* or *Fitbit* device, they can take measurements that can assess these organs. As an individual ages, the entire cardiovascular system suffers from deterioration; however, the conversations are almost silent where the microcirculation is concerned. The microvasculature consists of very small vessels, namely, the arterioles, capillaries, and venules. It is essential because of the functions it carries out. These include delivery of oxygen and nutrients, and the removal of carbon dioxide and waste products. As we age, our microvasculature changes. Modifications often result in damage to tissues and organs such as nerves, eyes, kidneys, and skin. Skin micro-vessels can indicate the health of the microcirculation in other tissues and organs.

The study addressed non-invasive monitoring of microvascular blood flow in the skin. The objective was to determine the extent to which three main control mechanisms of cutaneous microcirculation i.e., myogenic, neurogenic, and metabolic structures are affected by ageing. We utilised an animal model in the investigation which consisted of comparing young rats with older ones. The non-invasive technique included a point-based measurement system known as Laser-Doppler flowmetry. Perfusion analysis was used to estimate the microvascular blood flow within the region of interest, whilst spectral composition of the flow motion was analysed utilising a mathematical technique known as Continuous Wavelet Analysis.

Non-invasive Measurement of Microvascular Function to Determine Age-Related Differences

The amplitudes of the wavelet components for muscles in blood vessels, nervous supply, and cells lining blood vessels, which are involved in microvascular control, all measured lower in the older animals when compared with the young ones.

This finding demonstrates that ageing causes significant impairment of the three major control mechanisms that influence cutaneous microcirculation. The results provide an approach to investigate interventions that may affect specific control mechanisms of the microcirculation. These interventions can come from local foods and fruits, such as cocoa, watermelon, and citrus. This is currently being pursued. It can have implications for health, nutrition, and agriculture.





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Evidence Informed Policymaking in the Social Sector: Exploring their Needs

- *Mr Michael Pierre*
Research Assistant, CCHSRD

Buoyed by the positive response when the [PEERSS project was introduced to four of Trinidad and Tobago's Social Sector Ministries](#), the CCHSRD team stepped up the engagement by conducting a Needs Assessment. The aim of the latter was to gather data on the policymaking processes and capacity within the participating Ministries, thus ensuring that the project activities are closely aligned with their needs. The Social Sector Ministries included the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, Ministry of Planning and Development, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, and Ministry of Sport and Community Development. The Needs Assessment comprised Key Informant Interviews and an Online Survey.

Key informant interviewees comprised senior officials involved in policymaking and research including Permanent Secretaries, Deputy Permanent Secretaries, Policy Coordinators and Research Coordinators. The online survey was disseminated to all staff members involved in the policymaking process at each Ministry. The interviews and the survey were designed to generate information to help understand the perspectives and approaches being used to incorporate evidence in policymaking at these Ministries. In addition to defining the training needs of the Ministries, they were used to identify opportunities where Evidence Informed Policymaking (EIP) mechanisms, utilised in the health sector, could be adapted for use in the social sector.

Evidence Informed Policymaking in the Social Sector: Exploring their Needs

The project is about to enter the next phase – the delivery of bespoke training and capacity development activities. These will comprise virtual workshops and small group sessions.

PEERSS is an international partnership comprising institutions in 13 countries, which promote and support evidence informed policymaking in both the social and health sectors. It is jointly funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).





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hsr 2022

SEVENTH GLOBAL
SYMPOSIUM ON
HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH

SÉPTIMO SIMPOSIO
MUNDIAL SOBRE
INVESTIGACIÓN EN
SISTEMAS DE SALUD

**Health systems performance in the
political agenda: Sharing lessons for
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HSR2022 – Caribbean Pre-Conference Hosted Virtually on January 18, 2022

- Prof. Donald T. Simeon
Director, CCHSRD

The [Seventh Global Symposium on Health Systems Research \(HSR2022\)](#) will be held in Bogotá, Colombia from October 31st to November 4th 2022. It is hosted by Health Systems Global (HSG) and the theme is *“Health Systems Performance in the Political Agenda: Sharing lessons for current and future global challenges”*. In preparation for this global conference, a series of Pre-Conferences are being held in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). They are organized by an LAC Pre-Conference Committee, chaired by Dr Daniel Maceira, Executive Board Member of Health Systems Global (Representing the Americas). Professor Donald Simeon is the Caribbean representative on this Committee.

The Caribbean Pre-Conference was held virtually on January 18, 2022. Twelve papers were presented from researchers from The University of the West Indies (Cave Hill, Mona and St Augustine campuses), University of Guyana, St George’s University, and the Eastern and North-West Regional Health Authorities (Trinidad and Tobago).



HSR2022 – Caribbean Pre-Conference Hosted Virtually on January 18, 2022

The main objective of the Pre-Conference was to enhance the debate on the development and implementation of policies for more equitable and effective health systems and services in the Caribbean. It provided a space for interdisciplinary discourse between researchers and policymakers on their experiences and visions for the strengthening of health systems. In addition, the Pre-Conference had a critical role to strengthen Caribbean abstracts for presentation at the Global Symposium to be held in Colombia. This is the first time that the HSG Global Symposium is being held in Latin America and the Caribbean, and it is important to have a strong Caribbean presence, including the presentation of research papers. The deadline for the submission of abstracts for the Global Forum is April 15, 2022.

The Caribbean Pre-Conference was co-hosted by HSG; Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); The University of the West Indies – Caribbean Centre for Health Systems Research and Development (CCHSRD), and The George Alleyne Chronic Disease Research Centre; St George's University; University of Guyana; Anton de Kom University of Suriname; Caribbean Community of Practice for Health Policy and Systems Research; and the Caribbean Planetary Health Regional Hub.

CCHSRD had also collaborated with HSG and PAHO to coordinate the hosting of Caribbean Pre-Conferences in 2018 and 2020.





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