

# *Conference Highlights*



**16-19 JUNE  
2021**

**65<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CARPHA HEALTH RESEARCH CONFERENCE**

**PANDEMIC, NCDs AND CLIMATE CHANGE: The Caribbean's Triple Threat**

In the Caribbean, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are the leading cause of death and disability and take a heavy toll on societies. Climate change, is now well recognised as a threat to human health with impacts such as severe weather events and hurricanes, increases in mosquito-borne, food and waterborne diseases, water scarcity and food insecurity. Pandemics have also impacted large numbers of people in the Caribbean.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in large numbers of deaths and people being hospitalised. These crises are pushing already fragile regional healthcare systems and public health infrastructures to the limit.

Under the theme “Pandemic, NCDs and Climate Change – The Caribbean’s Triple Threat”, the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) in collaboration with the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), hosted its first ever virtual health research conference, from 16 to 19 June 2021.

Using the virtual format allowed the longest running health research conference in the Latin American and Caribbean region, an extended reach allowing persons from all corners of the world to participate.

This year, for the first time, the conference was held virtually. The conference was hosted on the vFairs platform <https://carphaconference.vfairs.com> and was available in two languages, English and French.



## The Conference

The conference was four days packed with 93 Oral and 78 Poster presentations from students, academia, health care professionals and CARPHA technical officers which were available to attendees. Sessions covered various aspects of:

- Climate Change
- Communicable Diseases
- Environmental Health
- Family Health
- Health Services
- Non-communicable diseases
- Nutrition
- Public Health

A total of 167 delegates registered for the Conference and 15 countries were represented. The majority of the delegates were from the Caribbean with others from the USA, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Brazil.

The abstracts have been published in the West Indian Medical Journal Volume 69 Supplement 2: 1–96 at <https://www.mona.uwi.edu/fms/wimj/vol-69-suppl-2-caribbean-public-health-agency-2021>

## Get Access to all Conference Events

***Although the Conference has ended all registrants have on-demand access until August 19, 2021.***

***Simply login to the conference site using your same email and password to view all the content of the Conference or sessions you may have missed.***

***If you registered for one or two days you will only be able to view the day(s) for which you registered.***

## Opening Ceremony

CARPHA kicked off its four-day Annual Health Research Conference on June 16 2021 with an Opening Ceremony

Dr. Joy St. John, CARPHA's Executive Director opened with remarks highlighting the conference's theme and importance of continued research and key partnerships to combat these threats.

These were reaffirmed in remarks by Emeritus Professor David Picou - Experimental Medicine, UWI and First Director of Research, Caribbean Health Research Council, Mr. Philippe La Cognata - Regional Director for the Atlantic Region, AFD and His Excellency Serge Lavroff - Ambassador of France to Port of Spain, Trinidad. A message to Conference Delegates was given by Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO).



The scientific programme commenced with the keynote address “The Caribbean’s COVID-19 Response” by Dr. St. John, who provided a synopsis of the emergency of COVID-19, its declaration as a pandemic and the important public health measures and responses of the Region’s Institutions including the critical role played by CARPHA as the public health agency mandated by the CARICOM Heads of Government to address this challenge.

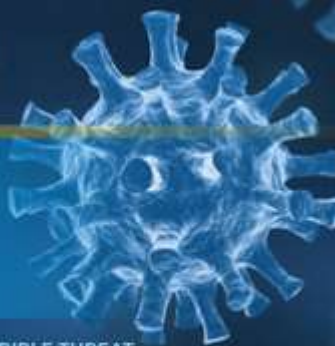
The Opening Ceremony was followed by a noteworthy COVID-19 Panel Discussion. The session moderated by Dr. Sharon Belmar-George, Chief Medical Officer, St. Lucia included:

- Dr. Douglas Slater, Assistant Secretary-General, CARICOM
- Captain Errington Shurland, Executive Director, Regional Security System
- Lt. Colonel Michael Jones, Executive Director, CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security
- Ms. Elizabeth Riley, Executive Director, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
- Dr. Didacus Jules, Director-General, Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States
- Prof. Clive Landis, Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of the West Indies



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PANDEMIC, NCDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE: THE CARIBBEAN'S TRIPLE THREAT



## COVID-19 PANEL DISCUSSION

**DATE: WED 16TH JUNE 2021**

**TIME: 2:30PM**

Atlantic Standard Time (AST)



**MODERATOR**

**Dr. Sharon Belmar-George**  
Chief Medical Officer, St. Lucia



**Dr. Douglas Slater**  
Assistant Secretary-General,  
CARICOM



**Dr. Didacus Jules**  
Director General, The  
Organisation of Eastern  
Caribbean States (OECS)



**Professor Clive Landis**  
Pro Vice-Chancellor, University  
of the West Indies (UWI),  
Barbados



**Lt Colonel Michael Jones**  
Executive Director, CARICOM  
Implementing Agency for Crime  
and Security (CARICOM IMPACS)



**Ms. Elizabeth Riley**  
Executive Director, The  
Caribbean Disaster Emergency  
Management Agency  
(CDEMA)



**Captain Errington Shurland**  
Executive Director, The Regional  
Security System (RSS)



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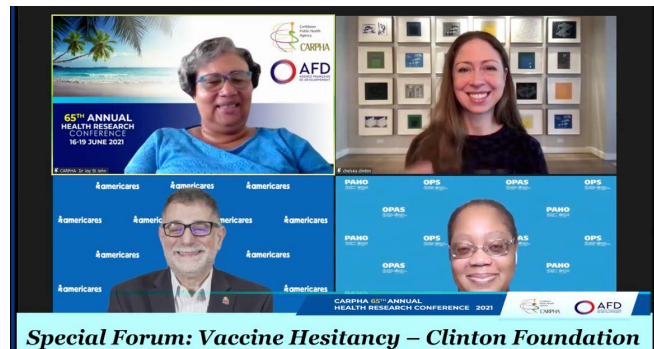
REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE: <https://carphaconference.vfairs.com>



## Special Forum on Vaccine Hesitancy – Clinton Foundation

On Day Two, delegates were treated to a thought-provoking **Special Forum on Vaccine Hesitancy**, chaired by Dr Joy St. John, and moderated by Chelsea Clinton of the Clinton Foundation. Panelists included:

- Dr Karen Broome, Advisor, Immunization, PAHO/WHO
- Dr. Rashad Massoud, Chief Program Officer at Americares



## Feature Lectures

Feature lectures were given by Professor Hugh Montgomery of the University College London, who spoke engagingly on “*Matters of Survival: The Human Impacts of Climate Change*”; and Dr. Diarmid Campbell-Lendrum, Head of Climate Change and Health Unit at the World Health Organization on “*Protecting health from climate change in the Caribbean: Do we already know enough?*”. Continuing on the theme “Pandemic, NCDs and Climate Change: the Caribbean’s Triple Threat”,



Day 3 of the Conference opened with a feature lecture “Ageing in the Caribbean yesterday, today and tomorrow” by Professor Dr. Denise Eldemire-Shearer of the Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona. Chaired by Dr. Joy St. John, the lecture served as the ideal prelude to the launch of CARPHA’s State of Public Health Report – Healthy Ageing. The final feature lecture of the conference “Probing in vivo Metabolism using Stable Isotope Tracer technique” was given on Day 4 by Professor Dr. Asha Badaloo of the Tropical Metabolism Research Unit, Caribbean Institute for Health Research, at UWI, Mona.



## Exhibition Hall

In parallel with the scientific presentations, Conference participants had an opportunity to engage with exhibitors who showcased their products, service and projects.







## Awards, Research Prizes and Closing Ceremony



Dr. St. John started the closing ceremony and festivities by welcoming and recognizing all the critical components - the incredible researchers, presenters, Masters of Ceremony, Chairpersons, participants, and CARPHA conference planning committee leads and their team that assured the success of the Health Research Conference in the virtual space.



**Dr. Denise Eldemire-Shearer**



**Prof. Asha Badaloo**

One of the highlights of the Conference was the Awards Ceremony at which health researchers were honoured for their influential and exemplary contributions in improving the health of the Caribbean people and their communities.

The presentations of Awards for Excellence in Research were made to Professors Dr. Denise Eldemire-Shearer and Asha Badaloo with the heart-warming and insightful citations by their colleagues Professors Minerva Thame of UWI and Dan Ramdath respectively.

This year, the Donald Simeon Prize for exhibited research excellence was launched.

Dr. Simeon was the former Deputy Director of CARPHA and currently Director of the Caribbean Centre for Health Systems Research and Development and Professor of Research and Biostatistics, Dean's Office, Faculty of Medical Sciences at UWI, St. Augustine. The Prize was given in his name in recognition of his outstanding contributions to research systems in the Region.



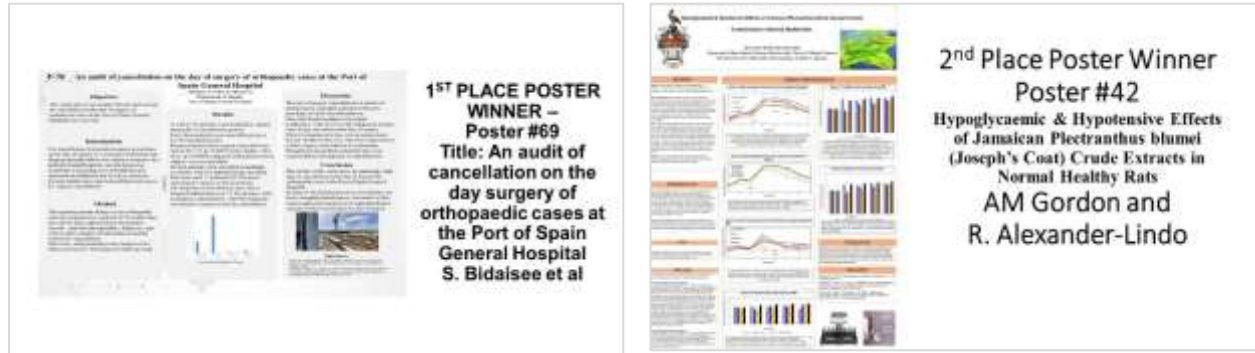
The Donald Simeon Prize was awarded to Dr. Zachary Ramsay for his paper “Quantitative Sensory Testing in the Assessment of Neuropathic Pain among Jamaicans with Sickle Cell Disease”.



This year's David Picou Young Researcher Prize was awarded to Dr. Kavita Dharamraj for her paper “A cross-sectional comparison of point-of-care A1CNow+ machine with laboratory HbA1c in detecting diabetes in urban communities, South Trinidad, 2019-2020”.



Ms. Vionetta Nurse was awarded the Student Prize for her paper “The use and understanding of nutrition labels on sugar-sweetened beverages: A study of consumers in Kingston & Saint Andrew, Jamaica”.



This year, first place in the research poster went to Dr. Shanta Bidaisee et al for “An audit of cancellation on the day surgery of orthopaedic cases at the Port of Spain General Hospital”. A.M. Gordon and R Alexander-Lindo captured second place for “Hypoglycaemic & Hypotensive Effects of Jamaican Plectranthus blumei (Joseph’s Coat) Crude Extracts in Normal Healthy Rats”.

The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Mark Sami, CARPHA’s Director of Corporate Services, and a rousing Toast to the Awardees and Prize Winners.

The conference closed with the Awards Ceremony and Research Prize Presentations, hosted by the conference’s Masters of Ceremony - Dr. Terri-Karelle Reid and Mr. Jason Williams.

## Sponsors and Exhibitors





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