Building a Cadre of Epidemiologists to Support Public Health in the Caribbean

Marshall Tulloch-Reid
Director, Epidemiology Research Unit
Caribbean Institute for Health Research (CAIHR)
The University of the West Indies
• Established in 1948, a regional University
• 3 main campuses in Jamaica, Barbados & Trinidad
• Open Campus in 17 English Speaking Islands

The University of the West Indies
Structure
Caribbean Institute for Health Research (CAIHR) (formerly the TMRI) - Established in 1999

- Brought together independent research units on the UWI campus

- Tropical Metabolism Research Unit & Sickle Cell Unit in Jamaica, the Chronic Disease Research Centre in Barbados and Epidemiology Research Unit was created

Caribbean Institute for Health Research

History
Sickle Cell & Epidemiology Research Units

Chronic Disease Research Unit

Tropical Metabolism Research Unit

Caribbean Institute for Health Research
• Few trained epidemiologists in the region – predominantly expatriates or regional nationals trained overseas
• Little change over time as capacity dependent on
  ✓ training opportunities outside the region for Caribbean nationals
  ✓ attracting and retaining persons with these skills – including trained Caribbean nationals

Epidemiology Training
• Creation of the ERU has been critical in the development of several initiatives
• Pulled together several epidemiologists / statisticians under one roof
• Creation of a focus for capacity building in the region
• Curriculum based on *London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine* with modification of content to meet regional needs

• First cohort enrolled in 2006

**MSc Epidemiology**
• University of Cambridge - Professor Carol Brayne First External Examiner
• University of the West Indies - Department of Community Health and Psychiatry & the Deans Office, Faculty of Medical Sciences, UWI
• Ministry of Health, Jamaica
• University of Manchester
• University of Leeds
• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
• University of Arizona
• Pan American Health Organization

MSc Epidemiology Partners
• Offered alternate years
• Tuition of $US 8,000 /year
• Approximately 20 graduates

MSc Epidemiology
• PhD programme established 2 years later
• First Graduate in 2013 – Thesis on *Depression and the Built Environment* awarded with high commendation
• Currently 4 candidates enrolled in programme
• Formed template for PhD programme offered by Barbados UWI campus

**PhD in Epidemiology**
Chronic Disease Group
Epidemiology Research Unit
- International Clinical Epidemiology Network
- WHO/TDR Effective Project Planning & Evaluation Training Network
- Cochrane Collaboration
In February 2009, the UWI became part of the International Clinical Epidemiology Network (INCLEN) with the creation of the UWI Clinical Epidemiology Unit (UWI-CEU)
• Damain Francis - PhD Epidemiology Candidate

• Emerging Leaders in the Americas (ELAP) Fellowship to the University of Ottawa for Training in Systematic Reviews
• **Chisa Cumberbatch** – MSc Epidemiology Graduate went on to train at Ottawa – part sponsored by University of Ottawa and the Epidemiology Research Unit - 2011

• **Nadia Bennett** - Internal Medicine Graduate went on to train at the US Cochrane Centre at Johns Hopkins University – funded through PAHO – 2012 & now Wellcome Trust Fellow in the Unit

**Capacity Building**
• Facilitated cross campus and interdepartmental collaborations
• Creation of new links with international partners
• Special supplement of the Journal of Clinical Epidemiology published in 2015 highlighting the work of the UWI-CEU

INCLEN / UWI-CEU
Journal of Clinical Epidemiology
Effective Project Planning and Evaluation (WHO/TDR)
The Launch of the Caribbean Branch of the United States Cochrane Center

June 6th-7th 2013
UWI Regional Headquarters

Symposium: Translating Research for Policy Impact and Practice
An Evidence-Based Approach
Caribbean Branch of the US Cochrane Centre (CBUSCC)
• Systematic Reviews with University of Ottawa, CAIHR
  Scoping Reviews & Systematic Reviews
• Annual Cochrane Author Training Workshops with US Cochrane Centre
• New networks

Cochrane Outputs
• Increase regional reach – development of distance learning & flexible learning opportunities

• Funding to support Graduate Students who are interested in Epidemiology Careers

• Increase core staff and diversity of skills among faculty

• Develop additional partnerships with larger Epidemiology training programmes

Next Steps