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## EDITORIAL

### Third Annual Symposium of the West Indian Immunology Society: A Virtual Celebration

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#### *Introduction:*

On Saturday, April 29th, 2023, the Third Annual Symposium of the West Indian Immunology Society (WIS) marked a significant milestone in the society's journey. This esteemed gathering, hosted virtually, showcased the remarkable progress achieved in the field of immunology. WIS, established in 2021, is a proud member of the International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS). Distinguished speakers and experts from various nations congregated to share their insights and discoveries, making this symposium an invaluable platform for scientific exchange and collaboration.

#### *Keynote Presentations:*

The symposium commenced with inspiring opening remarks by Prof. Welderez Dutra from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Prof. Dutra eloquently discussed the significance of International Immunology Day and shed light on the efforts of the Latino American and Caribbean Association for Immunology (ALACI). Dean Brian Cockburn emphasized the vital role of immunology in advancing scientific and technological progress, highlighting key methodologies such as ELISA. Additionally, Prof. Patrick Akpaka, Head of the Department of Para-Clinical Sciences, and Dr. Angel Vaillant, President of WIS, both representing the University of the West Indies (UWI), offered their valuable remarks.

#### *Diverse Participation:*

The symposium attracted esteemed presenters from Brazil, Canada, the United States, Jamaica, Cuba, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Notably, both undergraduate and postgraduate students actively participated, underscoring society's commitment to nurturing the next generation of immunologists.

#### *Program Highlights:*

The program featured an array of captivating topics and research areas. Noteworthy presentations included discussions on the use of monoclonal antibodies for treating psoriatic arthritis, exploring the immunometabolism of long COVID-19, and exploring the application of Artificial Intelligence in Medical Education and Health Care, specifically within the realm of immunology. Prof. B. Sa from UWI, St. Augustine, presented a paradigm shift in medical education and health care through AI, while Prof. Dutra delved into new cell profiling techniques in immune-mediated myocardial pathology associated with Chagas's disease. Other thought-provoking presentations covered subjects such as leptospirosis, cytokine storms, immunological effects on ear diseases, and applications of chicken egg immunoglobulins.

#### *Enriching Discussions:*

The symposium fostered engaging discussions on various topics of interest. Student Nelisia Noel, a fifth year MBBS student, delivered an insightful presentation on alopecia areata,



# WEST INDIAN JOURNAL OF IMMUNOLOGY

An official Journal of the West Indies Immunology Society

providing a comprehensive perspective on the subject. Wayne Labastide, a former lecturer at the University of the West Indies, presented a compelling talk on the present and future of RNA vaccines. Prof. Wezenet Tewodros effectively addressed the topic of off-target protection of BCG against unrelated infections. These discussions showcased the diversity of immunological research and its potential for transformative impact.

### *Exploring Novel Approaches:*

Dr. Lorenzo Gordon, a diabetologist, unveiled a potential regional solution for diabetic ulcers using a natural product called chitosan. This ground-breaking approach holds promise for the treatment of a challenging medical condition. Such innovative ideas and discoveries are a testament to the commitment of the West Indian Immunology Society to advancing healthcare in the region.

### *Looking Ahead:*

The success of the Third Annual Symposium has fuelled the enthusiasm of WIIS as it looks towards the future. Society eagerly anticipates broader support and engagement from a wider audience. By forging collaborative partnerships and continuing to foster scientific exchange, WIIS strives to propel the field of immunology forward, ultimately contributing to improved health outcomes for the West Indian region.