

STUDY ON SICKLE CELL DISEASE IN ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA: AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ANTIGUA SUPPORTS UNIVERSAL NEWBORN SCREENING

Dr. Shivon Belle Jarvis was a guest speaker at AUA's annual Research Day ceremony, where she spoke to the students, faculty, staff, and visitors at the American University of Antigua on her recent work on Sickle Cell Disease in Antigua and Barbuda. This significant study, recently published in the International Journal of Neonatal Screening, sheds light on the critical importance of early identification and intervention for newborns with Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) in Antigua and Barbuda.

The research, jointly conducted by Dr. Shivon Belle Jarvis, Dr. Edda Hadeed, Ketty Lee, Marie-Dominique Hardy-Dessources, Jennifer M. Knight-Madden, and Claudine Richardson, captivated the audience, as it underscored the pressing need for comprehensive public health initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges presented by this genetic disorder. The paper received an overwhelmingly positive response from all in attendance, further highlighting its impact and relevance.

SCD is a life-threatening condition that affects millions of people worldwide, with a higher prevalence in populations of African descent. In Antigua and Barbuda, SCD has long been a significant public health concern. This study provides critical insights into the prevalence of the disease and shows that SCD is a major issue in Antigua.

Providing proper medical assistance is only the start; we also need to start working on adequate, nationwide social programs to provide for those impacted by this disease.

The American University of Antigua (AUA) has demonstrated its commitment to combating SCD by

funding universal new-born screening for the disease in Antigua and Barbuda. This initiative has been instrumental in ensuring that every child born in the country is tested for SCD at birth, allowing for early detection and intervention to improve health outcomes.

AUA has also formed a strong partnership with the Sickle Cell Foundation in Antigua and Barbuda. Together, they have worked tirelessly to promote education, awareness, and support for those affected by the disease. Their collaboration has resulted in the development of comprehensive care plans and support systems for patients and their families, enabling them to manage the challenges associated with SCD more effectively.

The findings of the study, along with AUA's ongoing commitment to addressing SCD, serve as a testament to the importance of collaborative efforts in improving the health and well-being of vulnerable populations. By investing in research, education, and support initiatives, the American University of Antigua and the Sickle Cell Foundation in Antigua and Barbuda are making a significant impact in the fight against SCD.

At the conclusion of the question-and-answer segment of the presentation, Dr. Jarvis raised concerns over the funding of neonatal screening. Mr. Vernon Solomon, AUA's Vice President, reassured and reaffirmed AUA's commitment to providing continued resources and funding to this significant health issue. For more information on the study and the initiatives supported by the American University of Antigua, visit <https://www.mdpi.com/2409-515X/9/1/14>.

American University of Antigua

The American University of Antigua (AUA) is a premier medical institution that provides world-class education and training to future healthcare professionals. Committed to addressing global health challenges, AUA actively supports research and public health initiatives that contribute to the well-being of individuals and communities worldwide.

The Sickle Cell Foundation in Antigua and Barbuda

The Sickle Cell Foundation in Antigua and Barbuda is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by Sickle Cell Disease. The foundation works to promote awareness, provide support, and ensure access to quality healthcare for individuals and families living with SCD in Antigua and Barbuda.

AUA will host a series of Charity Cricket Matches at the Coolidge Cricket Ground (formerly Stanford Cricket Ground), in July. All proceeds to aid the fight against SCD.

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