Background

- Quality medical care in Jamaica, a developing island, remains a prime concern
- Due to the heavy focus on infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have been largely ignored
- NCDs are responsible for ~80% of total deaths
- Lack of island-wide action plan and strategy to tackle NCDs

Objective of Internship

To investigate the current disparities between national neglect of NCDs and on-the-ground medical treatment

Inside the Hospital

Scarcity of Resources

- Experiencing the day-to-day operations in the Mandeville Hospital provided insight into the disparities in healthcare between a westernized nation, such as the US, and Jamaica, a developing nation
- Because of the lack of essential resources (ie. thermometers, medical gloves, sophisticated medical technology) doctors were limited in their treatment of patients

Infrastructure

- The hospital building itself required structural repairs
- Due to limited funding, the administrators conservatively focused on the central area of the hospital, though the surgical wing needed repair of the ventilation system
- There was no air conditioning in the hospital with the exception of the surgical theater and the neonatal wing

Resiliency

- Despite the scarcity of resources and overcrowding, the nurses and doctors exhibit resiliency and genuine care for their patients, often working long hours with minimal sleep to ensure the success of a certain treatment plan.

Looking Ahead

This research laid the foundation for articulating a profile of the epidemiology of breast cancer incidence (ie. parity, family history) using patient data acquired

Questions

- What are the social barriers in breast cancer treatment access for Jamaican women?
- Which environmental factors most significantly influence breast cancer?

Conclusion

 Hopefully this research experience will contribute to the development of improved breast cancer prevention and treatment methods in Jamaica

Acknowledgements

This project could not have been possible without the support of the Projects Abroad Internship Program, Mandeville Regional Hospital as well as the various doctors who allowed me to get involved in their daily work, my thesis advisor Professor Metcalf, CHW, the Global Health Program, EEB, and ODOC for funding to support my summer project.