

### AV Gandhi Award for excellence in endocrinology

Sir,

The annual AV Gandhi Award for Excellence in Endocrinology, instituted in 2002, seeks to acknowledge and award the best research by postgraduate students in this subject. This letter reviews the trends in the award over the past 9 years, and assesses the overall status of endocrine research in Indian academic institutes through this.

The AV Gandhi Award for Excellence was instituted in 2002, in memory of the late Mr. A. V. Gandhi. The award is presented to the best thesis submitted for DM/DNB examination in the preceding year. Previous research has shown that the bulk of articles (81.06%) contributed to the Indian Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism are from teaching departments of medical colleges.<sup>[1]</sup> The AV Gandhi award brings together all these departments, and thus showcases the current trends in Indian endocrine research.

Data related to all previous awards were obtained from the offices of USV Pvt. Ltd, Mumbai. Data were available regarding the prize winners for all years (2002 to 2010) and regarding topics of all participants for the years 2007 to 2010. Missing information was obtained by contacting the participants. The topics were analysed and classified according to subspeciality and type of study.

Ten students participated in 2002, and this number went up to 12, 16, and 20 in 2003, 2004, and 2005. In 2007, 24 entries were received, while the next two years saw 16 and 18 contributions respectively. A total of 17 entries were received for the latest edition (2010 academic year). Data are available regarding the topic of dissertation of all participants for 4 years (2007-2010).

Classification of topics by subspeciality or gland was not easy. For example, an entry titled "hypogonadism in type 2 diabetes" could be classified as research on gonads, as well as on diabetes. Similarly, research on "thyroid autoimmunity in type 1 diabetes" could be construed as being part of thyroidology or diabetology. To overcome this, consensus was developed that the denominator study cohort would be used to describe the field to which the thesis belonged.

Of the 24 papers presented in 2007, the bulk of entries

were in diabetology (7/24) and bone mineral metabolism/parathyroid disease (7/24). Three papers each were based on pituitary and gonad science, with all the gonad papers focusing on PCOS. Two papers were on obesity, and one each on thyroid and adrenal.

In 2008, maximum entries related to thyroid (5/16), with significant contribution in bone mineral metabolism (4/16) and type 2 diabetes (3/16). There were two entries related to pituitary and neuroendocrinology, one on PCOS, and one on adrenal disease. It is noteworthy that one of the studies classified as thyroidology studied bone health in thyrotoxicosis patients.

The year 2009 saw 18 entries, of which the bulk were in diabetes (10/18). Of these, two papers were on type 1 diabetes, and one on gestational diabetes mellitus. Four papers related to thyroidology, two to bone mineral metabolism, and two to additional disease.

In 2010, the greatest emphasis was on bone and mineral metabolism (6/17 entries), followed by type 2 diabetes (4) and lipidology/metabolic syndrome (3). Adrenal was the focus of two papers, while one thesis each was on pituitary and thyroid disease.

These data show the emphasis on research in diabetology (a total of 24/75), bone mineral disease (19/75) and thyroidology (11/75) in Indian endocrine departments.

When all diabetes entries were reanalyzed and redistributed according to the numerator population (for example, a study on hypogonadism in diabetes was classified as being on gonads), the results were slightly different. With this reclassification, the diabetes entries fell to 18/75, bone mineral metabolism papers rose to 23/75, while thyroidology papers rose to 12/75, and gonad related research went up from 5/75 to 7/75.

In 2007, two studies were community-based ones, six papers had an interventional study design, and four were related to research on diagnostic modalities. In 2008, three studies were population based, four had an interventional component, and seven were related to research on diagnosis. In 2009, three population-based studies were entered. Interventional studies were 4 in number, while 8 were related to assessment of various diagnostic tests. In 2010, community-based studies were submitted by two students, interventional studies by four (including one randomized controlled trial), and diagnostic work by five

participants. Work on gene polymorphism was presented by two students.

Since inception, the first prize has been won six times by students of AIIMS, New Delhi, twice by KEM, Mumbai, and once each by SGPGI Lucknow and AIMS, Kochi. Two joint first prizes were declared in 2003.

The second prize has gone three times to SGPGI Lucknow, twice to AIIMS New Delhi, and once to KEM, Mumbai. No runner up prize was declared in 2003, 2008, and 2010.

Bone and mineral metabolism and thyroidology topics emerged as a prize winner four and three times respectively. Research on type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes, and adrenal was awarded the first prize once each. The second prize was awarded to bone and mineral metabolism research twice. Diabetes, thyroid, gonad, and adrenal research won second position once each during the years of study. Overall, of all 16 prizes, 6 have been awarded to work done on bone and mineral metabolism, while 4 have gone to workers of thyroidology.

Upon reclassifying the prize winning topics according to the 'numerator' topic of study, two thyroidology topics and one diabetology manuscript were classified as bone and mineral work. This increased the dominance of bone and mineral metabolism work in the AV Gandhi awards from 6/15 to 9/15.

Winners of the AV Gandhi Award are to be found busy working in academic institutes, government colleges, corporate hospitals, and private setups, across the country. The award winners have settled in states as diverse as Manipur and Haryana, Kerala, and Jammu and Kashmir, as well as in metros such as New Delhi and Bangalore. Thus the Award has become a truly pan-Indian tradition.<sup>[2]</sup>

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