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Space Medicine Association News

August 2011

The SMA Jeff Myers Young Investigators Award

The Space Medicine Association Jeff Myers Young Investigators Award (SMA JM YIA) is a competition intended for those making their first major efforts into Aerospace Medicine Research. To compete for this award, contestants must be making their first presentation of a scientific paper or poster at an AsMA meeting (excluding cases presented at Grand Rounds as a student resident); they must appear as first author on the paper; and they must prepare and submit a manuscript for judging. Finalists compete in a second phase of competition at the AsMA Meeting involving further evaluation of their presentation and interviews. The potential applicability of the findings to Space Medicine and the degree of involvement of the student in the project are major considerations. The finalists in this year's competition, selected from 175 contestants, are richly talented and diverse.



SMA JM YIA—Bonnie Posselt, M.B.Ch.B. (E), B.Se. receives the award from its founder Jeff Myers.



Space Medicine Association Jeff Myers Young Investigator Award—Finalists for the SMA JM YIA together with Dr. Myers (center, back).

USAFSAM; Lt. Col. Rene Heise from the German Institute for Aviation Medicine and the Mountain Wave Project; Kimberly Turner from Australia; Dalia Hashish, M.D., from the Egyptian Civil Aeromedical Council; and Michael Gallagher, M.D., from the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada.

If you want to do more than just exist, you must have a dream. As the Space Program prepares for the next stage of exploration, the Young Investigators are also building their dreams by preparing and honing their skills: Natacha Chough has become a Wilderness First Medical Responder; Michael Gallagher is in a remote medicine residency in the Canadian Rockies; future YIA contestant Derek Nusbaum is preparing for the South Pole; and Rene Heise will be attempting a new world glider record in Tibet! Let's give this new generation of Space Explorers everything they need...so all our futures will be bright!

The winner of the 2011 SMA JM YIA is Bonnie Posselt, M.B. Ch.B. (E), B.Se. In the photo to the left, Ms. Posselt receives the award from its founder Jeff Myers. Her paper is entitled "The Effects of Light Exercise on Psychomotor Performance and Arterial Oxygen Saturation at a Simulated Altitude of 4572 M (15,000 feet)." In the paper, Ms. Posselt demonstrated that performance is not yet significantly affected by exercise at that altitude level, although her continuing work appears to show a decrement as altitudes increase. This will be indispensable data as we select the working atmosphere for our habitats in space and the spacecraft to get us there. Dr. Posselt was a student of Professor Ernsting at the Kings College of London (the College had produced the runner-up paper by Dr. Houston just last year). It is safe to say that she has a keen understanding of statistics as Prof. Ernsting insisted she check each calculation by hand. It is good to see the professor live on through the work of his students. Bonnie began in aviation as a mere 'cadet' in the UK version of our Civil Air Patrol, but aspires to complete her pilot's license and graduate as a Diplomat in Aviation Medicine. Beyond that, even the sky may not be her limit!

The first runner up is Hong Gao, O.D., Ph.D, an Optometrist and scientist from the Naval Aeromedical Research Laboratory in Pensacola, FL. Her paper is entitled: "Pupillometry as an Investigative Tool in the Aeromedical Sciences." The second runner up is Cathy DiBiase, BSN, a long time flight nurse at the Kennedy Space Center who has just begun expanding her horizons into the realm of research. Her paper is entitled: "Subjective and Objective Comparisons of Heat Tolerance in the Level A Protective Ensemble vs. the NASA Propellant Handlers Ensemble During Exertion." Other finalists include: Cengiz Ozturk, M.D., from Turkey; Paola Verde, M.D., a captain in the Italian Air Force; Natacha Chough, M.D., from Stanford University; Leedjia Svec, Ph.D., a lieutenant from the NAMR Unit at San Antonio; John Heaton, M.A., from the Aeromedical Consult Service of