

recognized. Members of the IAP, could consider this proposal and write to the journal or to the President at the IAP. The IAP must not, however, revert to the old system of giving their awards.

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## REFERENCES

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## Evaluation of Award Papers for National Conferences

The article 'Evaluation of award papers for national conferences'(1) and comments thereon(2) were well timed and thought provoking. We agree that there is a need for developing a scaled structured system of evaluation to minimize the scope for subjective errors. However, we would like to put forward a few suggestions.

Firstly, all papers submitted for national awards should be scrutinized by an ethical committee. This committee shall decide the ethical righteousness of the study. Consequent upon the acceptance by the ethical committee, the paper goes to a panel of judges. Blindfolding of authors' and institution's name should be done. At the same time any mention of the name of the institution from the material and methods should also be deleted. Preferably,

a second panel of judges should also evaluate these studies objectively in order to minimize the inter-observer bias. Weightage of this second panel of judges should be less than that of first one. Experts from basic sciences including biostatistics should be involved to further upgrade the system of evaluation.

The proposed scaled structured research evaluation system should give more weightage to the initial design of the study (case selection, inclusion criteria, randomisation, selection of controls), hypothesis on which study is based and appropriate statistical analysis and its interpretation.

We endorse the view that some weightage (5-10%) be also given to the art of presentation. This will keep up the interest and competitive spirit alive as well as allow a comparison of the 2-3 top ranking papers in each category.

Finally, it is desired that before a new evaluation scale or system is put into operation, it should be presented to the Academy members and comments or criticism invited. This will help in early identification and timely rectification of lacunae, if any.

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