

Contribution to CET Award

Bill Harvey explains why an article by Dr Dan Rosser won this year's Contribution to CET Award

It is something of a cliché with these sort of articles to suggest that there was great difficulty in selecting one winner from a shortlist of such a high standard. In this case I will allow myself to indulge as, in all the years of being involved in the Eye Care Award for the best CET article, the award for 2008 proved the hardest for our judges to arrive at a final winner.

The shortlist

The shortlist, as ever, was selected using a number of criteria. The first was simply to look at the number of respondents for the CET exercise. Though this figure is subject to a number of influences, such as the ease of answering the questions and the timing within the three-year CET cycle, the number of respondents for one particular article was way ahead of all the others.

A simple guide to taking pupillary distances by City University optician Shaunagh Aitken recorded one of the highest 'hits' we have yet seen, showing that there is still a demand for education in some of the more core skills areas. We also had an excellent review paper from the Waterford Macular Pigment Group which, under Dr John Nolan, is producing some cutting edge research in the field of macular degeneration and influences upon it. Their review of the putative effects of nutrition and other influences upon AMD impressed the judges significantly.

There was a close run effort selected from our series on 'Getting started in therapeutics' which has proved particularly popular and what might be considered a somewhat left field article on the ocular effects of cystic fibrosis which made the short list by way of its originality. Another strong effort from Cardiff University by now Dr Helen Court involved measuring stress levels in contact lens patients using lie detector type means.

However, the final vote after much arguing went to Dr Dan Rosser for his paper on 'Visual acuity measurement and its pitfalls'. What finally won the judges over to a unified decision was the way this article described a part of



Dr Dan Rosser (left) accepts the trophy from D&A chief executive Andy Ferguson

everyday optometry, the measurement of acuity using letter recognition on a chart, and showed how this very subjective method of visual assessment had many inherent errors. Every eye examination in the UK today will



involve some form of acuity check, usually based on a Snellen chart, and Rosser used data gained from his PhD to show how, not only has this method barely changed for well over a century where all other aspects of examination had evolved, it was also heavily reliant on subjective interpretation, as well as a form of notation and calibration that was less sensitive than others when detecting acuity levels and, more importantly, small acuity changes. The ease with which this article could be understood, the way acuity measurement was explained, and the contribution to the impact this would have on the way any reader might practise subsequent to reading it, all combined to make Rosser's article a clear winner – after a good deal of toing and froing by the judges.

Dr Dan Rosser

At the risk of sounding like a real old fogey, I first met Rosser when he was in his final year at City University, the year I first started teaching there (too many years ago to recall). He spent some time at the Institute of Optometry and then in private practice while starting his research at Moorfields Eye Hospital.

He became a well known face on the CET circuit at this time; particularly with a series of lectures for the training group Optometric Educators Limited concerning visual fields analysis. His work with Snellen acuities and its sensitivity eventually led to his PhD and it was after reading some of his output that I commissioned him to write the article.

Rosser now works at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital Ophthalmology Department, having upped sticks from the capital with his optometrist wife Nicola and their two young children. The article is one I will recommend to all students and pre-reg, especially when it is evident they are becoming over-influenced by the Snellen chart ●

Contribution to CET Award sponsored by Dollond & Aitchison

Winner

● **Dr Dan Rosser, Visual acuity measurement and its pitfalls**

Runners up

- **Helen Court, Patient anxiety in practice**
- **Katherine Evans, Rachel North, and Christine Purslow, The ocular associations of cystic fibrosis**
- **Lucy Titcomb and Professor John Lawrenson, Getting started in therapeutics**
- **Shaunagh Aitken, Back to basics in dispensing – pupillary distance measurement**
- **Mark Kirby, John M Nolan, Edward Loane and Stephen Beatty, Macular pigment and its putative protective effect for ARM**