

NICHD Science Communication Awards “TmT” COMPETITION

THREE-MINUTE TALKS

NICHD DIR is launching a competition among intramural trainees at the graduate and postdoctoral level, to communicate in three minutes or less the substance of their research and its significance to improving human health—in such a way that can be understood by a broad scientific audience.

Objectives:

- Develop scientific communication skills among our trainees
- Showcase intramural science to the general public, on the NICHD web site and in social media
- Enhance awareness of the breadth and significance of NICHD research

Eligibility: For entry into the competition, fellows must electronically submit a 200-word (maximum) narrative about their three-minute research story and a submission form, no later than January 10, 2014, to yvette.pittman@nih.gov. Up to 25 DIR predoctoral and postdoctoral, visiting, and clinical fellows will be invited as semifinalists to compete for these science communication honors.

Awards: The competition winners will each receive recognition, the specifics of which still need to be finalized, for: 1st place, 2nd place, and people’s choice. For the people’s choice award, online ballots will be provided to the DIR community. In addition, the winning recorded presentations may be played at the annual NICHD BSC and/or Advisory Council meetings and used on other occasions, which will promote the research of our trainees.

Timeline: All accepted fellows must participate in the two “science communication” preparatory workshops, receiving professional oral presentation coaching. Led by public speaking coach, Scott Morgan, the interactive workshops will help fellows explain their work to a nonspecialized audience in a short timeframe.

The first workshop on January 30th will offer fellows tips on how to convey their science clearly and quickly, telling an interesting story with only one slide, using accessible language. On February 24th, fellows will practice their delivery, receiving individual feedback from Scott Morgan. The three-minute talks of all accepted fellows will be judged by a distinguished NIH panel on March 11th, and 10 finalists will be selected to advance to the next stage of the competition. To improve the finalists’ stage presence, eye contact, vocal range, and maintenance of a steady pace, they will participate in a video training workshop on March 28th led by Scott Morgan. Subsequently, the taping of all finalists will occur in mid-April, and online voting by an outside panel of judges will take place in May.

Rules: Fellows can use only a single PowerPoint slide with animations. However, no sound, props, or video files are permitted. **Presentations cannot exceed three minutes**, and must use only spoken words.

Judging Criteria:

- Ability to clearly and succinctly describe a research project in language appropriate to a general scientific audience
- Have a logical flow that captures and maintains the audience's attention
- Spend adequate time on each element of the presentation, from description of the background to key results, including its relevance to human health
- Enhance the presentation with a clear and concise PowerPoint slide

Questions should be directed to Yvette Pittman in the Office of Education, DIR, NICHD.