

Tuesday January 31, 2012

Lorelei Mason wins inaugural \$5000 ANZCA media award

New Zealand health journalist, Lorelei Mason, has won the inaugural \$5000 Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists' (ANZCA) media award for the best news story or feature about anaesthesia or pain medicine that appeared in the Australian or New Zealand media in 2011.

Ms Mason is Health Reporter for Television New Zealand News and her entry, "Awake Craniotomy", aired as the lead item on New Zealand's top rating daily current affairs show, *Close Up*, on February 21.

The story showed a patient at the Wellington Hospital undergoing an awake craniotomy, a type of brain surgery where the patient is conscious during the middle part of the procedure and asked to perform neurological tasks so the surgeon can test regions of the brain before they are incised or removed.

"I felt the public needed to know there is so much more to an anaesthetist's role than merely putting patients to sleep and sitting next to a monitor during surgery," Ms Mason said.

"The role of the anaesthetic team throughout the entire surgical process, and the extent of their involvement in post-operative pain relief, is not well understood or appreciated by the wider public and it needs to be.

"The item displays the exacting skill required in re-awakening a patient during surgery and bringing them to a level of consciousness where they can perform set neurological tasks, yet at the same time balance the requirement for the patient to feel no pain from the surgical procedure gaining access to the brain."

Ms Mason's story was one of 15 entries for the hotly-contested media award, which will be run again this year.

The award was judged by former ABC journalist, lecturer and media training expert, Doug Weller; anaesthetist and *ANZCA Bulletin* Medical Editor Dr Michelle Mulligan; and former *Age* health editor and communications expert, Tom Noble.

The judges were impressed by the quality of the award entries and had a lengthy discussion before finding Ms Mason the winner. They concluded:

"This was a stand-out piece of journalism that showed how important anaesthesia is to this complex surgical procedure. It was an amazing story that highlighted what can be achieved in this day and age through anaesthetic drugs and pain management. The piece was well-written, and clearly and simply explained the procedure and the patient's experience to

the audience. The level of trust and access Lorelei Mason gained to showcase this operation was extraordinary.”

Entries for the \$5000 ANZCA media award for the best news story or feature on anaesthesia or pain medicine to appear in Australian or New Zealand media (print, television, radio or online) in 2012 are now open.

To see Lorelei Mason’s winning award, please go to www.anzca.edu.au. Details about the \$5000 ANZCA media award for 2012 can be found at:

www.anzca.edu.au/communications/Media.

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