

April 9, 2015

Michael Sexton wins 2014 ANZCA Media Award for pain story

“Chronic pain”, a television report by Michael Sexton that aired on ABC 7.30, has won the \$A5000 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 and New Zealand media in 2014.

Mr Sexton’s report was aired in February last year and looked at the personal, social and economic burden of chronic pain, which affects one in five people but remains broadly misunderstood.

“When researching the story on chronic pain the answer that stunned me came from a doctor who told me chronic pain is the fourth most prevalent condition in Australia yet the drugs mainly used to treat it are thousands of years old,” Mr Sexton said.

“There are not many problematic conditions with such old medications.”

He said from this starting point, he wanted to prepare a report that started with looking at what was still unknown about chronic pain, and followed where some of the answers could be found – and said he was surprised at the inequity of funding available.

“The greatest take away for me was the scale of the problem, the debilitating effect it has on patients – and yet it almost doesn’t exist in the language of Medicare.”

Entries for the 2014 ANZCA Media Award spanned pain medicine and anaesthesia – across print, radio and television media. The award 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 Rowan Thomas, and former *Age* health editor and Ambulance Victoria media director Tom Noble.

The judges agreed the report highlighted the social and economic burden of chronic pain in Australia, which affects one in five people yet remains little-understood. Reporter Michel Sexton examined what was known about chronic pain in the body and looked at the effectiveness of current treatments, as well as where research in this field was heading.

Entries for the \$A5000 ANZCA Media Award for the best news story or feature on anaesthesia or pain medicine to appear in the Australian or New Zealand media (print, television, radio or online) in 2015 are now open.

To see Mr Sexton’s winning story, please go to www.anzca.edu.au. Details about the \$A5000 ANZCA Media Award can be found at www.anzca.edu.au/communications/Media.

- For more information, please contact ANZCA Media Manager Ebru Yaman on +61 3 8517 5303, +61 408 259 369 or eyaman@anzca.edu.au. Follow us on Twitter [@ANZCA](https://twitter.com/ANZCA).