FEATURE

THE BMJ AWARDS 2017

The BMJ launches ninth medical awards

Nigel Hawkes explains how to enter and talks to some previous winners

Nigel Hawkes *journalist, London, UK*

The annual search for excellence in healthcare has begun once more with the opening of nominations for the ninth BMJ Awards, the competition in which the best initiatives from across the UK are invited to compete for the prestigious recognition.

This year, as last, there are 15 entry categories covering the whole of medicine from bench to bedside, not forgetting that the way services are planned and delivered is the key to providing effective care. Past winners represent the best that doctors and the NHS can achieve, with tough times putting an ever greater value on innovation and cost-effectiveness.

Some awards—such as those for primary care, cardiology, cancer, education and innovation—are included every year, while permutation of the many other possible categories aims to ensure that over time all specialties get their chance. This year sees the appearance of three categories that were not included in the 2016 awards—imaging, surgery, and mental health.

The process begins with the completion of a nomination form, downloadable from *The BMJ* Awards website (<http://thebmjawards.bmj.com/Home>) and culminates in an award ceremony to be held at the Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel in London on 4 May 2017. Entries are judged by distinguished panels that include expert patients, and all those shortlisted will be the subject of a short article in *The BMJ* in the weeks running up to awards night.

Spur to further success

Winning one of *The BMJ* awards draws attention, attracts media coverage, and reinvigorates enthusiasm: it is not the end of a process but an important punctuation mark. Chris Harris, long term conditions lead at Bradford Clinical Commissioning Group, whose Bradford's Healthy Hearts campaign won the clinical leadership category in 2016, said it was recognition of all the work that had gone into targeting patients in 41 Bradford general practices with uncontrolled cholesterol and trying to put it right. Since winning the award in May 2016, Bradford's Healthy Hearts has sustained its high profile by sponsoring an event last

month in City Park in which a Guinness world record was set for the longest ever chain of people making heart shaped hand gestures. Its total of 2331 people eclipsed the record of 1936 held, improbably, by the Tokyo Steel Products Dealers Association.

The next stage of the campaign, focusing on hypertension, was launched at the event in the park. "Launching our blood pressure campaign there was a great way of getting across a serious health message which could help thousands of people," he said.

"GPs in Bradford are pulling out all the stops to reduce the number of people suffering from cardiovascular disease, and getting more people to have their blood pressure checked—by a practice nurse, pharmacist, or using a home blood pressure monitor—could further reduce the risk of stroke and heart disease."

Another of the 2016 winners, radiologist Sam Hare, is working with NHS England to get the technique of ambulatory lung biopsy that he pioneered at Barnet Hospital more widely adopted. A training day will be held at the Royal Free Hospital in London on 11 November (<http://www.pobas.co.uk/faculty/4592130312>).

The headline sponsor for the awards will once more be the MDDUS (the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland), which also sponsors the primary care award.

Fiona Godlee, editor in chief of *The BMJ*, said: "This year's awards seem particularly important, given the extraordinary pressure that the NHS is under and the impact this is having on health professionals' morale and working conditions. The awards offer us all a chance to properly celebrate the professionalism, commitment, creativity, and hard work of healthcare teams across the country, and to show case wonderful examples of excellence and innovation in how patient care is designed and delivered."

"It's a huge pleasure to see the wide range of high quality entries that we receive each year, and I look forward to sharing these achievements with readers of the journal and at the gala event in May."

Categories for *The BMJ* Awards 2017

Anaesthesia Team—sponsored by Royal College of Anaesthetists
Cancer Care Team
Cardiology Team
Clinical Leadership Team—sponsored by GMC and Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management
Dermatology Team—sponsored by LEO Pharma
Education Team
Imaging Team—sponsored by Alliance Medical
Innovation Team
Lifetime Achievement—sponsored by BMA
Mental Health Team
Palliative Care Team—sponsored by Marie Curie
Primary Care Team—sponsored by MDDUS
Prevention Team—sponsored by Public Health England
Surgical Team
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