

# Fostering Excellence in Endocrinology Research: The Inaugural Edition of the Yuvaratna Awards of the Endocrine Society of India

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## Abstract

The Endocrine Society of India (ESI) has introduced a new award, the Yuvaratna Awards, for recognizing the best research conducted by recently graduated endocrinologists across the country. This research should be carried out independently and not as part of or as a continuation of work initiated during residency. Two distinct categories were established: one for individuals working in academic institutions and another for those employed in private hospitals. This distinction acknowledges the unique benefits and challenges faced in both settings. This initiative serves as an excellent means to foster and promote research enthusiasm among young endocrinologists. This article elaborates on our firsthand experience as participants in the inaugural session of this award and delves into how it influenced our motivation for further research.

**Keywords:** Endocrine Society of India, research, Yuvaratna

## INTRODUCTION

The Endocrine Society of India (ESI) has demonstrated a resolute commitment to the advancement of research within our country, and one significant stride in this journey is the introduction of the ESI Yuvaratna Awards. This award program has been created with the specific objective of celebrating and fostering research initiatives among early-career endocrinologists. The announcement of the inaugural edition of the ESI Yuvaratna Awards this year signifies a momentous leap towards the realization of the society's vision. These awards represent a vital platform for acknowledging the achievements of emerging researchers, motivating them to embark on innovative research projects, and nurturing the scientific potential of the next generation of endocrinologists.

The announcement of these awards was met with a palpable sense of enthusiasm and excitement within us. It was a moment filled with anticipation as it was the first time the prospect of an awards program dedicated to recognizing and encouraging our research efforts had come to light. The sheer realization that our work could be presented before experts from across the country and be celebrated and acknowledged on such a platform was

immensely motivating. This excitement was not just about the awards but also about the opportunities they represented for us to grow, learn, and collaborate with our peers. Our excitement was particularly heightened by the inclusion of a category specifically designed for research conducted in private practice. This innovative dimension of the ESI Yuvaratna Awards 2023 recognizes the valuable contributions of endocrinologists working in private clinical settings and invokes interest among all young endocrinologists working in private hospitals. It acknowledges that impactful research doesn't solely originate from academic or institutional environments but also thrives within the context of private practice. This inclusion showcases the dynamic nature of the field of endocrinology and its adaptability to various professional settings. As such, it opens new avenues for aspiring researchers and practitioners in the

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private sector, reinforcing the importance of their work in advancing the understanding and treatment of hormone-related disorders. The establishment of this category not only broadens the scope of the awards but also exemplifies the commitment to inclusivity and the promotion of excellence across diverse areas of endocrinological practice.

After completing their qualifying degrees, endocrinologists, as well as all doctors in our country, must confront the dilemma of choosing between a life dedicated to hardcore academics or a career in corporate or private hospitals. While each of these paths comes with its own set of benefits and challenges, for several generations, significant advancements in medical research have been primarily associated with those affiliated with academic institutions. While private practice can offer financial rewards and early-career satisfaction, many practicing endocrinologists eventually start to miss the academic allure of the profession and aspire to engage in meaningful research after a few years in private practice. The joy that accompanies well-executed research resulting in significant findings and impactful publications with the potential to change established practices is indescribable. The yearning for this sense of fulfilment is particularly strong among endocrinologists in comparison to other medical specialties. In a recently published interesting review article on strategies to promote research among endocrinologists in private practice, the authors have identified that while university teachers and faculty mostly find research as enjoyable and rewarding, it requires extra effort for clinicians settled in private practice to move out of their comfort zone and engage time and energy in research.<sup>[1]</sup> For them, doing research in their own setting using their own data is often the driving force to initiate research and there are primarily three ways private practitioners can participate in research activities, to contribute, collaborate, or to initiate research as a leader.<sup>[1]</sup> A keen interest in research is often the primary reason many talented medical professionals choose endocrinology as their field of specialization in our country. Opportunities for research were an important factor in choosing Endocrinology as a career for 16% of the first-year residents in the country.<sup>[2]</sup> That being said, there are also limitations when conducting research, especially within a private setting. In addition to issues such as lack of funding and ethical concerns, there's the challenge of recruiting study subjects. Most patients in private healthcare settings are often hesitant to participate in trials due to concerns about potential adverse events, time constraints, or a lack of trust in the investigators. For healthcare professionals, there are several obstacles to overcome, including the shortage of manpower and supportive staff for research within the private sector. Therefore, any research successfully conducted in private hospitals, despite these obstacles, deserves to be recognized and celebrated. By categorizing research conducted in a private capacity as distinct from research carried out in academic institutes, ESI has taken a commendable step in acknowledging and fostering research talent wherever it may be found. Simultaneously, ESI has shown appreciation for the groundbreaking work done in

academic institutions, emphasizing the need for high-quality research in the country.

Moreover, while nothing compares to the appeal of original research, it's noteworthy that several remarkable and practice-changing meta-analyses of trials were presented during the ceremony, not only by contestants from private institutions but also by academic ones. High-quality meta-analysis has the potential to address many research questions that have remained unanswered despite numerous trials and can lead to significant changes in clinical practice. Meta-analysis is considered equivalent to original research since it critically analyses data from several trials and supports evidence-based medical practice.<sup>[3]</sup> It requires minimal resources, offers robust statistical analyses, and underscores the importance of fostering an interest in conducting meta-analyses on various aspects of the subject among endocrinologists worldwide.

An intriguing criterion of the contest was that the presented work had to be conducted independently by the presenter, rather than as part of their prior dissertation or its continuation. ESI already has the AV Gandhi Award ceremony for dissertations completed during the DM or DNB endocrinology course.<sup>[4]</sup> This step was warmly welcomed because it encourages researchers to think and work outside their comfort zone, exploring fascinating ideas and findings in various areas of endocrinology. In fact, for those working in the private sector or in institutes separate from their parent institutions, this could pave the way for establishing an entirely new research framework or enhancing an existing one, making them better suited for high-quality research.

The ESI AV Gandhi Awards played a pivotal role in setting the stage for the ESI Yuvaratna Awards, providing a foundation of motivation and inspiration for us as aspiring early-career endocrinologists. Attending the former event just after our residency, we were exposed to the impressive research achievements of our peers and the potential for impactful contributions to the field of endocrinology.<sup>[5]</sup> This experience served as a catalyst, igniting our passion for research and innovation. The recognition of our peers' work at the AV Gandhi Awards showcased the significance of perseverance and dedication in the medical profession, especially during the crucial early-career phase. It instilled in us a strong determination to continue our research pursuits and make meaningful contributions to the field.

In the beginning, we both had our reservations and hesitations about applying for these awards and self-doubt did creep in. However, what made the difference was our strong and supportive friendship. As good friends, we acted as each other's pillars of strength and motivation. We recognized the potential benefits and opportunities that these awards could bring to our careers. Together, we pushed each other to step outside our comfort zones.

Our friendship created a platform for open discussions, the exchange of ideas and constructive feedback, which helped

us refine our award applications. It was a collective effort that enabled us to present our best selves and research to the award panel. In the end, this shared journey of encouragement and support served as a testament to the powerful role of friendship that has helped us to be better, both personally and professionally. Our collective experience of pushing each other to apply for the awards, and subsequently witnessing one another's achievements, demonstrated the remarkable strength of camaraderie. It underscored that the support and encouragement of friends can be a driving force in achieving our aspirations and becoming the best versions of ourselves.

The award experience was a truly remarkable and transformative journey, offering us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to present the research we had published to a distinguished panel of judges hailing from diverse regions across the country. Presenting our research before a diverse panel of experts not only allowed us to showcase our contributions but also subjected our work to a rigorous evaluation. The presence of judges from different parts of the country and different top-notch institutes added a layer of diversity and expertise to the evaluation process, ensuring a well-rounded and comprehensive assessment of our research. It was a platform where our findings were scrutinized, discussed, and appreciated for their potential impact on the field of endocrinology. The feedback and insights gained from the judging panel were invaluable in refining our research and broadening our perspectives.

The contest also served as a platform that allowed us to witness the awe-inspiring research contributions of our fellow colleagues in the field of endocrinology. The opportunity to delve into their groundbreaking work was not only enlightening but also deeply inspiring. We were able to gain invaluable insights into the cutting-edge developments and innovative breakthroughs that were shaping the landscape of endocrinological research in India. Observing the dedication and excellence demonstrated by our peers, we were not only filled with a profound sense of admiration but also a strong desire to strive for even greater achievements. The event acted as a powerful catalyst, motivating us to raise the bar, push the boundaries of our own research, and contribute to the advancement of the field in more impactful ways. It underscored the importance of collaboration, healthy competition, and continuous learning within our community, emphasizing that together, we can collectively drive progress and make a significant difference. The competition also played a crucial role in helping us identify and address our weaknesses. While celebrating the accomplishments of our colleagues and peers, we had the opportunity to reflect on our own research and professional growth. The experience of witnessing outstanding work highlighted areas in which we might need improvement or further development. It encouraged self-evaluation, a necessary step in personal and professional growth. All in

all, the award experience was a significant milestone in our research journey, providing us with an exceptional platform to share our work, receive constructive feedback, and connect with experts in the field.

We take immense pride in our participation in the inaugural edition of these awards. It has been a remarkable experience, filled with inspiration, learning, and self-discovery. As we move forward in our careers as endocrinologists, we are deeply committed to continuing our contributions to research in the field of Indian endocrinology. The experience of these awards has reinforced our dedication to advancing research and improving patient care. We are determined to explore new frontiers, collaborate with fellow researchers, and find innovative solutions to the challenges faced in the realm of endocrinology. These awards have not only celebrated our achievements but have ignited a fervour within us to contribute to the future of Indian endocrinology through our collective efforts. We hope that many more early-career endocrinologists will be motivated to embark on their own journeys of groundbreaking research, whether in academic institutions, public healthcare systems, or private research organizations, and thereby nurture a culture of continuous learning, discovery, and progress within the field of endocrinology.

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### Conflicts of interest

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### Authors Contributions

L.N. and S.M. conceived, designed and drafted the manuscript. S.M re-evaluated and revised the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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