



**College of Psychiatrists  
of Ireland**

Wisdom • Learning • Compassion

**Press Statement 11<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

**‘Galway Medical Students in Touch as Spike Milligan trophy goes ‘Wesht’!**

NUIG medical students have won the annual Spike Milligan Public Speaking Competition for the third time since the competition began in 1999 and in close second as runners up was the RCSI team.

Run and hosted by the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland, the Spike Milligan Public speaking competition for medical students is an award established to foster and promote communication skills and raise awareness of mental health issues among doctors in training.

Held recently in a packed venue, the Sugar Club, Dublin, teams from seven medical schools competed with passion, style, drama, current facts and comedy as well as excellent public speaking skills. Fiona Nolan and John Campion of the winning team from Galway medical school (NUIG) provided the audience and judges with an entertaining, realistic portrayal of the topic this year ‘*Online or out of touch- Mental Health Services for Generation Y*’. The judges commented particularly on their use of drama throughout their presentation as well as their public speaking skills to outline the issues. Runners up, Elizabeth Ahern- Flynn and Akansha Bhargava of RCSI, also used drama throughout to raise issues & facts relevant to the topic.

The topic is in keeping with the College’s 2013 theme *Youth Mental Health*. On the judging panel this year were Scott Ahearn, See Changes’ outreach and partnership officer, along with Dr Antoinette D’Alton, chair of the College’s Faculty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and Dr Karen O’ Connor, senior registrar in general adult psychiatry and former Spike winner. Dr Matt Sadlier, consultant adult psychiatrist, chaired the night.

*“We were delighted once again with the high standard of delivery, performance, entertainment, information and thought provoking messages from all the teams”* said Dr Anne Jeffers Director of External Affairs of the College and Consultant Psychiatrist, East Galway Mental Health Services. *“Congratulations are due to all but especially NUIG, the team, their academic team and all their supporters who came with confidence and a banner stating ‘Spike Going Wesht’ before the competition began which added to the banter and overall atmosphere!”*

Seven teams of two from medical schools UCC, RCSI, TCD, UCD, QUB, UL and NUIG competed to try and win the competition which includes the perpetual Dick Joynt sculpture and a cash prize. Teams are encouraged to demonstrate clear communication skills in a way that will inspire and inform a public audience. The Award is named in recognition of the late Spike Milligan’s work in de-stigmatising mental illness through his books and appearances. Spike passed away not long after he lent his name to the competition and sadly never had the opportunity to be on the judging panel.

Photos attached

Ends

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