



Fourth year medical student scoops top prize in ETS 2015 Essay Competition

“What is the most hygienic way to dry your hands?”

Brussels, Belgium – March 18, 2016 - Fourth year medical student, Sarah Freeston, has scooped the prize in the 2015 European Tissue Symposium Essay Competition on the most hygienic way to dry your hands.

Her winning essay was judged the best by the ETS Scientific Panel consisting of six eminent professors and microbiologists from across Europe. She received her cash prize of €1500 at the Faculty Club in the University of Leuven in Belgium last week followed by a lunch with the Scientific Panel.

"Sarah did a wonderful job in emphasizing the importance of proper hand washing and drying from the perspective of the bacteria," explained Chairman of the Scientific Panel, Prof Marc Van Ranst. "Her very well-written essay will be a useful tool in reaching out to a younger audience to convince them that hand drying using single-use towels is the preferred way to dry your hands as the final step in the handwashing process. This is also the mode of hand drying favoured by the World Health Organisation."

Sarah, who is studying medicine at University College London, saw the competition after ETS reached out to universities to encourage students to enter. She had seen hand-dryers and was keen to read the literature on their hygiene record, particularly as her studies meant that she spent time in a clinical environment and understood the importance of optimum cleanliness.

Speaking on her victory Sarah Freeston said: "The title of the essay interested me as it was quite different from the more academic and scientific competitions. The more light-hearted tone appealed and I decided to write the piece from a different perspective in order to engage children who would be put off by a more adult tone. I wrote the essay over the Christmas holidays, so I think I was also inspired by animated films!" In light of that inspiration, Sarah created the germ character Gerry to explain the life of germs in the washroom and the importance of proper hand drying with single-use towels.

ETS has undertaken extensive research into the most hygienic way to dry hands. Studies with both the Universities of Leeds and Westminster have been peer-reviewed and published in the well-respected Journal of Hospital Infection. A strong proponent of broadening awareness of these results among younger people, ETS launched its first Essay Competition last year, following four years of very successful Cartoon Contests.

"We are very pleased with the freshness and quality of this winning essay," said Roberto Berardi, chairman of ETS. "It is important to convey the facts to the younger generation and to demonstrate that the humble single use paper towel is in fact state-of-the art in terms of hand hygiene and reducing air contamination in washrooms. The future is quite literally, in their (hopefully well washed and dried) hands."

Read the essay here: <http://europeantissue.com/home/ets-written-essay-competition-2015/>



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About Sara Freeston

Sarah Freeston has a strong interest in publishing and worked in biomedical publishing as Commissioning Editor for three journals focused on neurology and comparative effectiveness research. She is passionate about providing a platform from which medical students can publish their work. Further she is the Chief Peer Review Editor for student journal Res Medica.

About ETS

ETS is the European Tissue Paper Industry Association. The members of ETS represent the majority of tissue paper producers throughout Europe and around 90% of the total European tissue production. ETS was founded in 1971 and is based in Brussels. For more information: www.europeantissue.com

Editorial contacts:

duomedia

Jony Maesele | tel. +32 2 560 21 50 | jony.m@duomedia.com

ETS

Roberto Berardi | tel. + 39 011 8128810 | info@europeantissue.com