



ETS Essay Competition winner Sarah Freeston with ETS's Dr Roberto Berardi.

Fourth-year medical student, Sarah Freeston has scooped the prize in the 2015 European Tissue Symposium (ETS) Essay Competition on the most hygienic way to dry your hands.

Freeston's 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 €1 500 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 emphasising the importance of proper hand washing and drying from the perspective of the bacteria," explains Prof Marc Van Ranst, Chairman of the Scientific Panel. "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 hand-washing process. This is also the mode of hand drying favoured by the World Health Organisation."

Freeston, who is studying medicine at University College London, noticed 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.

Freeston says: "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 to me 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, Freeston 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.

Winner of 'most hygienic way to dry your hands' essay competition announced

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," says 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." **ACR**

To read the essay visit: <http://euqwan155000.com/Actm/e5-winner-essay-competition-2015/>

