



**25<sup>th</sup> November 2016 Press Statement**

## **Spike goes to Belfast!**

### **QUB win annual CPsychI Public Spike Milligan Public Speaking Competition for Medical Students**

After a fantastic night in the Sugar Club in Dublin, **Swati Vara and Catherine Eves**, medical students from **Queen's University Belfast** took home the top prize at the Annual Spike Milligan Public Speaking Competition hosted by the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland (CPsychI). They faced tough competition from RCSI whose focus on mental health issues as a consequence of lower socio-economic standing earned them the Runners-Up prize.

This Public Speaking Competition was first held in 1999 as part of the Changing Minds Campaign of the College, addressing the stigma associated with mental health problems. Spike Milligan generously leant his name to the competition. It honours his great work as an advocate for those affected by mental ill health.

Teams of two from UL, NUIG, TCD, RCSI & QUB spoke on the topic of:

***"All Changed, Changed utterly"* (Yeats, Easter 1916): 1916-2016 Mental Illness and Recovery – All the Children of the Nation Treated Equally Now?**

Teams highlighted various issues which contribute to mental illness and affect recovery such as stigma, traveller rights, unemployment, and social codes of masculinity.

This year the judging panel consisted of CPsychI REFOCUS (Recovery Experience Forum of Carers and Users of Services) members **Dr Marina Bowe** consultant psychiatrist and **Mr Rick Rossiter**, as well as Trainee Psychiatrist and recent winner of the John Dunne Medal for psychiatric research **Dr Cornelia Carey**.

CPsychI Director of Communications and Public Education **Dr John Hillery** said *"The Spike Milligan participants continue to provoke and amaze and this year's competitors raised the bar again in content and presentation. Mental illness has been stigmatised in medical schools too. The presentations suggest that modern medical students can see beyond the stigma and that gives me great hope for the future."*

The aim of the competition is to foster and promote communication skills among doctors in training; with a focus on mental health. It is also an opportunity for public outreach and engagement on matters concerning mental health issues. Teams are encouraged to demonstrate clear, reflective 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.

**Photos attached**

## **ENDS**

**Mary Hayes**

**Digital Communications Administrator**

**College of Psychiatrists of Ireland | 5 Herbert Street | Dublin 2**

**Tel: 01 -634 4374**

**Email: [mhayes@irishpsychiatry.ie](mailto:mhayes@irishpsychiatry.ie) | web: [www.irishpsychiatry.ie](http://www.irishpsychiatry.ie)**

Notes for the Editor:

The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland was formed in 2009. It is the professional body for psychiatrists in the Republic of Ireland. The Mission of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is to promote excellence in the practice of psychiatry. The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is the sole body recognised by the Medical Council and the HSE for the training of doctors to become specialists in psychiatry and for the continuing assurance of the career long competence of specialists in psychiatry. The College supports the delivery of mental health services in line with the recovery model and supports the delivery of the national policy on mental health services A Vision for Change.

### **Photo Captions:**

**IMG\_0455.jpg:** (L-R) Catherine Eves (QUB Winner), Dr Ruth Loane (CPsychI President), Swati Vara (QUB Winner)

**IMG\_0452.jpg:** (Back row L-R) Oisin Brady Bates, Sebastian Carlos Grazia, Dr Ruth Loane, Domhnall McGlacken Byrne. (Middle row L-R) Louise Burke, Wayne McDonough, Lia McCann, Rachael Wu. (Front row L-R) Mairead McFadden, Catherine Eves, Swati Vara, Ivan Witt.

**IMG\_0394.jpg:** (L-R) Ivan Witt, Rachael Wu, Wayne McDonough

**IMG\_0335.jpg:** Rachael Wu (University of Limerick)

**IMG\_013.jpg:** Domhnall McGlacken Byrne (Trinity College Dublin)

**IMG\_0072.jpg:** (L-R) Oisin Brady Bates, Louise Burke (National University of Ireland, Galway)

**IMG\_0287.jpg:** (L-R) Sebastian Carlos Grazia, Wayne McDonough (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland)