

# HKU Faculty of Dentistry wins five international research prizes

The HKU Faculty of Dentistry has won five research awards from the International Association for Dental Research (IADR), the world's largest non-government dental research organisation. The awards were announced and presented on 16 March 2011 at the 89th General Session & Exhibition of the IADR, which was held in San Diego, California, USA.

The five research prize winners were Faculty staff member [Dr Xiao-li Gao](#); three PhD research postgraduate students, [Dr Nihal Bandara](#), [Ms Thanuja Herath](#), and [Dr Otto LT Lam](#); and an undergraduate dental student, [Mr Jack C Ji](#).

"I would like to congratulate our staff and students for bringing home these IADR awards. The Faculty is very proud of this unique international achievement," says [Professor Lakshman Samarnayake](#), HKU Dean of Dentistry. "These are prestigious and very competitive prizes that recognise high-quality research and innovation, as judged by international peers, and were presented at a major global conference attended by more than 5000 delegates. I hope the successes stimulate even more world-class dental research at our Faculty." The prize winners and prizes are listed below:



**Dr Xiao-li Gao (Postdoctoral Fellow in Dental Public Health)**  
*IADR/AADR William J Gies Award for Clinical Research*  
Sponsored by J Morita

These joint IADR/American Association for Dental Research (AADR) awards are given to authors of the best papers published in the *Journal of Dental Research* and are presented in three categories: Biological, Biomaterials & Bioengineering, and Clinical Research. The award is named after William J Gies, the founder of the *Journal of Dental Research*, the official publication of the IADR and AADR. Winning papers describe work that has very significantly advanced knowledge in some aspect of dental research. The award consists of a monetary award of US\$1,000 and a plaque.

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[Dr Xiao-li Gao](#) and her colleagues won the award in the Clinical Research category for a study that tested if a questionnaire, a clinical oral examination, and several biological tests could be used to predict the likelihood of caries development in kindergarten children. They developed five different assessment models and found that one of them, consisting of the questionnaire alone, was simple but accurate enough for possible adoption as a community-wide screening tool for high-risk children.

(Gao XL, Hsu CY, Xu Y, Hwang HB, Loh T, Koh D. Building caries risk assessment models for children. *J Dent Res* 2010;89:637-43.) Medline link: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20400721>



**Dr Nihal Bandara (PhD student in Oral Biosciences and Periodontology)**

**Ms Thanuja Herath (PhD student in Periodontology)**

*IADR-Colgate “Research in Prevention” Travel Awards*  
Sponsored by Colgate-Palmolive

These travel awards were established to support students and young investigators conducting research in the area of oral disease prevention. The award was given this year to six individuals, with a monetary award of US\$2,000 each, to allow them to present their research at the annual IADR General Session.



Dr Bandara’s poster presentation was titled “Bacterial lipopolysaccharide modifies *Candida albicans* biofilm development at transcriptional level”; his supervisors are [Dr R Watt](#), [Prof LJ Jin](#), and [Prof LP Samaranyake](#).

Ms Herath’s poster presentation was titled “Systems biology unravels novel biomarkers in heterogeneous PgLPS-HGF interaction”; her supervisors are [Prof LJ Jin](#) (Faculty of Dentistry) and Dr Y Wang (HKU Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine), and her research collaborators are Prof R Darveau (University of Washington, Seattle, USA), [Dr CJ Seneviratne](#) (Faculty of Dentistry), and Prof CY Wang (UCLA School of Dentistry, Los Angeles, USA).

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**Dr Otto Lam (PhD student in Oral Rehabilitation)**

*IADR/Lion Dental Research Award for Junior Investigators*

Sponsored by LION Corporation

These prizes, each a monetary award of US\$2,000, are intended to support improvements in oral health sciences through the efforts of junior investigators by: (1) recognition of outstanding and innovative research in basic dental science for the improvement of public dental health; and (2) recognition of applied research achievements for the improvement and development of oral care products for the prevention of oral diseases.

Dr Lam's award, in the Behavioral, Epidemiologic, and Health Services Research category, was for his research project "Evaluation of oral hygiene interventions in patients following acute stroke". His supervisor is [Prof C McGrath](#) and his collaborators are [Prof LP Samaranayake](#), Dr LSW Li (Director of the Rehabilitation Unit at Tung Wah Hospital), and Prof A McMillan (former Chair Professor of Oral Rehabilitation).



**Mr Jack C Ji (BDS IV student)**

*IADR/Unilever Hatton Divisional Awards*

Sponsored by Unilever

These awards were established to encourage outstanding young dental scientists to carry out research, attend the annual IADR General Session, and compete in the IADR/Unilever Hatton Competition and Awards.

Mr Ji won a Divisional Award for the IADR South East Asia Division, for his project "NSPT [non-surgical periodontal treatment] favourably modulates plaque biofilm and host response". His supervisors were [Prof LJ Jin](#), [Prof LP Samaranayake](#), and [Dr CJ Seneviratne](#).

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For more information about the HKU Faculty of Dentistry, visit <http://facdent.hku.hk>

**Media contact:**

Ms Melody Tang, Communications and Development Officer, HKU Faculty of Dentistry; Tel: 2859 0210; E-mail: [meltang@hkucc.hku.hk](mailto:meltang@hkucc.hku.hk)

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