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Honoring Our Researchers— The APsAA Scientific Paper Prize

Wendy Jacobson and Jonathan Shedler

The APsAA Scientific Paper Prize is an annual award for the most outstanding empirical paper relevant to psychoanalysis published in English in a peer-reviewed journal. The brainchild of Robert Michels, the prize honors a small but growing cadre of psychoanalytic researchers whose work is crucial to the vibrancy of psychoanalysis, if not its very survival. The prize-winning papers often gain considerable attention in the broader fields of psychology and psychiatry, but tend to go unnoticed by the clinical psychoanalysts who constitute the majority of APsAA members—hence this brief description of the winning papers since the inception of the prize.

A PSYCHOANALYTIC ALTERNATIVE TO DSM

Honorary APsAA member Jonathan Shedler won the inaugural Scientific Paper Prize for his groundbreaking article, "A new language

for psychoanalytic diagnosis," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 50 (2): 429-456, 2002. The article described a new approach to personality assessment and case formulation, the Shedler-Westen Assessment Procedure (SWAP), that captures the richness and complexity of psychoanalytic constructs and formulations while providing reliable data for research. The instrument has been used to demonstrate structural (versus symptomatic) change in psychoanalytic treatment and to develop a new classification of personality disorders—as an alternative to DSM-IV Axis II—that is not only scientifically valid but also psychoanalytically relevant. Research based on the SWAP has also empirically validated key psychoanalytic tenets including, for example, the role of unconscious aggression in depression, the centrality of projection in paranoia, and the centrality of oedipal conflict in patients with hysterical personality styles.

DIFFERENTIAL THERAPEUTICS: ANALYSIS VS. THERAPY

The second Scientific Paper Prize went to Sidney J. Blatt and Golan Shahar for their paper, "Psychoanalysis—with whom, for what, and how? Comparisons with psychotherapy," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 52 (2): 393-447, 2004. The research builds on Blatt's pioneering distinction between two fundamental developmental lines, one concerned with the capacity for relatedness ("anacitic") and the other with self-definition ("introjective").

Continued on page 8

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INSIDE TAP...

National Meeting
Highlights 6-13

APsAA Fellows 16

Freud's Single Shot
at Capturing
College Students 19

The Psychoanalytic
Glossary From
Sterba to Akhtar 21

Behavioral Finance,
Part II 22

I Used to Be a Doctor . . 23



National Meeting Highlights

Scientific Paper Prize

Continued from page 1

Using data from the Menninger Psychotherapy Research Project, the study demonstrated that ruminative, self-reflective introjective patients benefitted most from psychoanalysis. In contrast, dependent, non-reflective, affectively labile anaclitic patients benefitted most from psychotherapy. The findings not only speak to the question of when psychoanalysis (versus psychotherapy) is indicated, but validate Blatt's conceptual model of personality development—one Peter Fonagy has described as "the first genuinely psychodynamic developmental psychopathology model."

COUNTERTRANSFERENCE

The third annual Scientific Paper Prize went to Ephi Betan, Amy Kegley Heim, Carolyn Zittel Conklin, and Drew Westen for their paper, "Countertransference phenomena and personality pathology in clinical practice: An empirical investigation," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 162 (5): 890-898, 2005. Under the guidance of honorary APsA member Drew Westen, this group identified eight facets or dimensions of countertransference, providing a complex and



Wendy Jacobson



Jonathan Shedler

Weber, John F. Clarkin, and Otto F. Kernberg for their paper, "Change in attachment patterns and reflective function in a randomized controlled trial of transference-focused psychotherapy for borderline personality disorder," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 74 (6): 1027-1040, 2006. With elegant methodology, the study demonstrated that a psychoanalytic approach to treating borderline personality, transference focused psychotherapy (TFP), was superior to both dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) and psychodynamic supportive psychotherapy (PSP) in developing the capacity for mentalization (reflective function) and in altering insecure attachment patterns. These intrapsychic processes are thought to be critical mutative factors in the treatment of borderline personality pathology.

and working through of core unconscious conflicts, proved superior to applied relaxation training (ART), an active psychotherapy considered an evidence-based treatment for panic. The article exploded the myth in the mental health professions that only cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) offers effective treatment for panic disorder.

A LASTING CURE

The sixth and most recent Scientific Paper Prize went to Anthony Bateman and Peter Fonagy for their paper, "Eight-year follow-up of patients treated for borderline personality disorder: Mentalization-based treatment versus treatment as usual," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 165 (5): 631-638, 2008. This controlled clinical trial demonstrated that mentalization-based treatment is superior to psychiatric "treatment as usual" for patients with borderline personality disorder. At eight-year follow up, 87 percent of patients who received treatment as usual still met diagnostic criteria for borderline personality disorder, compared to 13 percent of patients who received mentalization-based treatment. No other treatment for personality pathology has shown such enduring benefits.

The charge of the APsA Scientific Paper Prize Committee is to review the major analytic journals for outstanding empirical contributions and to accept and review nominations of papers published in any peer-reviewed journal (see details at www.apsa.org/About_APsA/Awards/Scientific_Paper_Prize.aspx). The authors need not be APsA members. Judges rate finalist nominations for conceptual and methodological rigor, innovation, scholarship, contribution to cumulative knowledge, and significance for psychoanalysis and science.

The Scientific Paper Prize carries an award of \$1000, a certificate for each winning author, and a program slot at the APsA National Meeting, held in January, for the author(s) to discuss their research and its practical relevance to clinical psychoanalysis. Mark your calendars—Bateman and Fonagy will be expounding on their work at the upcoming 2010 National Meeting on Thursday, January 14, from 2:00-4:30 p.m.

Continued on page 9

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nuanced picture of clinicians' reactions to their patients. More importantly, the authors linked countertransference patterns to patient personality style, demonstrating that certain patient personality styles reliably and predictably elicit certain countertransference reactions. For example, clinicians treating narcissistic patients predictably experience rage, resentment, feelings of being used, and fantasies of ending the treatment.

TREATMENT OF BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER

The fourth annual Scientific Paper Prize went to Kenneth N. Levy, Kevin B. Meehan, Kristen M. Kelly, Joseph S. Reynoso, Michal

PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR PANIC DISORDER

The fifth annual Scientific Paper Prize went to Barbara Milrod, Andrew C. Leon, Fredric Busch, Marie Rudden, Michael Schwalberg, John Clarkin, Andrew Aronson, Meriamne Singer, Wendy Turchin, E. Toby Klass, Elizabeth Graf, Jed J. Teres, and M. Katherine Shear for their paper entitled, "A randomized controlled clinical trial of psychoanalytic psychotherapy for panic disorder," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 164 (2): 265-272, 2007. This study was the first randomized controlled trial (RCT) of a psychoanalytic treatment for panic disorder, panic focused psychodynamic psychotherapy (PFPP). The therapy, which emphasizes transference

National Meeting Highlights

Robert Michels chaired the Scientific Paper Prize Subcommittee for the first three years, we co-chaired the subcommittee for the next three, and recently Barbara Milrod took over the reins as chair. Other subcommittee members presently include Ephi Betan, Glen Gabbard, Kenneth Levy, and Alana Spiwak. In the past, Sidney Blatt, Norman Doidge, Robert Emde, and Robert Waldinger have served.

This overview of the prize winning papers gives a brief taste of the depth, breadth, and diversity of psychoanalytic research today. It runs the gamut from sophisticated assessment methods to differential therapeutics to validation of fundamental psychoanalytic concepts to comparative efficacy studies. Heartening news indeed, not only for psychoanalytic clinicians and researchers alike but for the public they serve.

APSA

APsaA Scientific Paper Prize

The Committee on Scientific Activities

Subcommittee on Science Paper Prizes

Awards the Sixth Scientific Paper Prize to

**Anthony Bateman,
F.R.C.Psych.
and
Peter Fonagy,
Ph.D., F.B.A.**



“Eight-Year Follow-Up of Patients Treated for Borderline Personality Disorder: Mentalization-Based Treatment Versus Treatment as Usual”

American Journal of Psychiatry
165(5): 631-638, 2008

— SEVENTH ANNUAL —



Scientific Paper Prize

2009 Call for Submissions \$1000 Award

The Scientific Paper Prize recognizes a psychoanalytically relevant empirical paper of outstanding merit published in English in a peer-reviewed journal. Authors need not be members of APsaA. Judges will review the major psychoanalytic journals to identify papers for consideration. Others are invited to submit papers published in any peer-reviewed journal.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 1, 2010.

**Please send a PDF file
of your 2009 published paper to:**

Barbara Milrod, M.D.

Chair, Subcommittee on Science Paper Prizes

c/o Tina Faison

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For more information, please see

http://www.apsa.org/About_APsaA/Awards/Scientific_Paper_Prize.aspx

or

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