

My Experience with Torrent's Young Scholar Award Quiz

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I have always had keen interest in quizzes since the very beginning of my academic career. As a 6-year resident in the Department of Neurosurgery, AIIMS, New Delhi, and having passed the MCh exam at 5 years, I started hunting for quizzes. My first Neurosurgery quiz was the one organized by Skull Base Surgery Society of India at AIIMS Rishikesh, where I scored the highest in the multiple-choice quiz (MCQ) round and was finally placed third in the final round. This experience gave me enough confidence to pursue some more quizzes. Finally, I found out the Torrent Young Scholar Award (TYSA) quiz which consisted of three rounds: Online round, followed by Zonal round, and National round as the final round.

Around 150 Neurosurgery residents appeared in the online round of which 32 residents were selected, 16 each from North and South zones. The following Zonal round consisted of four parts, MCQs, poster presentation, clinical case, and viva rounds, where the 16 participants from each zone competed amongst themselves for the top six positions. The Zonal round for North zone was held in Delhi. MCQ round began and it was a booster for me as the questions seemed pretty easy and straightforward. In the poster presentation round, I presented my thesis "Early Gamma Knife therapy in operated patients of Glioblastoma Multiforme." My presentation was received very well by the judges and got the best remarks out of all presentations. These two rounds decided the fate of top 10 out of 16 who would then compete in the clinical and viva rounds. Having been selected in the top 10, I appeared in the clinical and viva rounds. So, we were being displayed the same case on projector with history, examination, and radiology and then asked the relevant questions. The case was cervical compressive myelopathy and I answered pretty well with the correct diagnosis made on the history slide only. It felt like I was appearing for my MCh exam viva for the second time (pun intended indeed)! The curiosity about the results was rising and then the time for the results came. Hurray!! I made it to the top six who will be competing with the other six participants from the South zone. I had a good lunch afterwards at the venue and came home with a high head.

The same old routine of endless enticing skull base surgeries in operation theatre (OT) 1 continued for 1 month, thereafter I went to Ahmedabad for the much-hyped final National round. Being the only candidate representing my alma mater AIIMS, I was quite unstrung. MCQ round began and being a tough round, I managed to clinch only about half of them to be correct. Second and third rounds were buzzer rounds based on radiology with hefty negative marking for wrong answer. All the participants were almost at par in these two rounds with me bagging only one correct answer (which was not counted due to some timing of the buzzer dispute!!). The unnerving continued until the debate round came. My topic was "Severe Head Injury with Intracranial Surgical Lesion." I had to talk against surgery. Three minutes of presentation followed by 1 minute rebuttal. Discussing about the whole era of Decompressive Craniectomy in Patients with Severe Traumatic Brain Injury and Randomised Evaluation of Surgery with Craniectomy for Uncontrollable Elevation of Intracranial Pressure trials and the various trauma scores, I made fair points and destroyed my opponents once and for all. They say "a stitch in time saves nine" and this was my trump card to the entry into top six for the clinical and viva rounds. My clinical case began and it was going pretty well with making the diagnosis early on but then came the histopathology slides which I had no clue of. A series of questions went unanswered. I was a little disheartened with my performance. The result was announced and I could not make it to the top three; however, one of the judges tipped me off about me losing by just a fraction of points.

Leaving the rest aside, it was a fulfilling experience and an exam simulator. The tips and tricks I gained from my mentors and guide Prof. Deepak Agrawal and Dr. Kanwaljeet Garg helped me a lot in the process. These kind of activities keep you motivated and let you know about your weak points and the level of competition. At the end of the day, I consider myself blessed to have such great faculty and teachers at my institute who will always be guiding me in my future endeavors.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.