

STUDENT POSTER AWARD CEREMONY & CLOSING

Student Poster Award Ceremony

Shawn Ryan, National Program Director for Homeland Security Research | *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

Dr. Shawn Ryan welcomed everyone to the Student Poster Award Ceremony. Poster submissions from students and early career scientists were judged on four aspects: knowledge and presentation of the lightning talk, the scientific content, the visual appeal of the poster, and the potential impact of the work. Dr. Ryan announced the third, second, and first place winners of the Student Poster Competition.

The third-place winner was Devanya Mahalingam, for their poster titled “Improved Assessment of Skin Decontaminants: Development and Validation of Robotic System for the Accurate and Reproducible Dermal Application of Candidate Products”. Judges noted the poster was well-organized with a clearly state aim, sufficiently described conclusion, and found great potential for this robotic approach to be applied.

Ms. Devanya Mahalingam was invited to say a few words. Ms. Mahalingam thanked her supervisors, colleagues at University of Hertfordshire, DEFCON, the Decontamination Conference organizing committee, and the judges.

The second-place winner was Andreia Tavares Pinhal, for their poster titled “Safety Profiling of a Candidate Decontamination Product: Assessing the Dermal Absorption of Particulate Zirconium Hydroxide through Dry and Sweat-Covered Skin”. Judges noted she had a great understanding of her research and was able to answer critical questions related to her research efforts. Dr. Ryan announced Ms. Pinhal was unable to attend the Student Poster Award Ceremony but would be contacted via email.

The first-place winner was Nevine Amer, for their poster titled “The Influence of Exposure Duration and Dwell Time on the Skin Decontamination Effectiveness of Particulate Zirconium Hydroxide”. Judges noted Ms. Amer demonstrated complete knowledge of the subject matter and answered every question directly and accurately during the live Meet Now session. Ms. Amer was invited to say a few words. Ms. Amer thanked her colleagues and professors at University of Hertfordshire and DEFCON for their collaboration. She also thanked the Decontamination Conference conference organizers for allowing her an opportunity to present her work.

Dr. Ryan congratulated all the winners and thanked all those who submitted posters for consideration and participated in the conference.

Closing Remarks

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Dr. Shawn Ryan remarked on the growth of the Decontamination Conference since its first occurrence in 2005, with 2021 marking the 12th Conference. He thanked the Conference Chairs, Anne Mikelonis, Viktoriya Plotkin, and Erin Silvestri for all their hard work, and the conference Organizing Committee for assisting in multiple aspects of conference, including reviewing abstracts and coordinating sessions. Dr. Ryan also extended thanks to ICF, EPA's support contractor, for supporting the conference. He noted the conference ran very smoothly, with multiple concurrent sessions and lots of different options for participants to join.

Dr. Ryan thanked the five plenary speakers and all moderators and provided brief summaries from each session. There were over 484 participants from 18 different countries, and while the conference was entirely virtual this year, participants were still able to engage with speakers.

Throughout the course of the week, participants were able to exchange information, a main goal of conference, and strengthened connections. Dr. Ryan informed participants all sessions were recorded and available on virtual conference CVENT platform for 90 days following the close of the conference. Conference proceedings would be available and posted on EPA website.

Dr. Ryan thanked everyone for participating and shared the next Decontamination Conference is scheduled for May 2023. The 2021 International Decontamination Research and Development Conference was closed with hope that it would spark future collaborations and innovations to combat the impacts of disasters and contamination incidents and bring together and create partnerships.
