

Ig Nobel Prize

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In my usual search in the scientific literature, I often found the item Ig Nobel Prize. I was not sure what it was and I looked for its significance.

The first answer was the explanation that this was a prize created in 1991 and

its complete name was Ignoble Nobel Prize. But the awarding ceremony took place in Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and was presented by real Nobel Prize winners. All these made me curious and I looked forward to the content.

The creator was Marc Abrahams, editor and co-founder of *Annals of Improbable Research*. Awards were presented for discoveries which “cannot or should not be reproduced”. They included research in all fields of authentic Nobel Prize, including physics, chemistry, physiology/medicine, literature, economy and peace, but also other domains, such as biology, engineering, public health or interdisciplinary research. Ten prizes were awarded each year.

In 1994, the ceremony moved to the Sanders Theatre at Harvard University and came back to

MIT in September 2024. It is sponsored, among others, by Harvard Computer Association and Harvard-Radcliffe Society of Physics Students.

To begin some comments on this subject, in 2000 Sir Andre Geim got the Ig Nobel Prize for levitating a frog by magnetism, but 10 years later he won the real Nobel Prize in physics for his works in electromagnetic properties of graphene – a material that is extracted from graphite and is made up of pure carbon. In the same context, Professor Roy G. Glauber, who was the official “Keeper of the Broom” in the Ig Nobel Prize ceremonies, could not attend the 2005 awards gala because, in the same time, he was in Stockholm to receive a genuine Nobel Prize in Physics for its contribution to the quantum theory of optical coherence.

Here I offer some examples of Ig Nobel Prizes as they are presented in Wikipedia (accessed December 2024).

1995

- **Psychology** – presented to Shigeru Watanabe, et al, of Keio University, who successfully trained pigeons to discriminate between the paintings of Picasso and those of Monet.
- **Public Health** – presented to Martha Kold Bakkevig of Sintef Unimed in Trondheim, Norway, and Ruth Nielsen of the Technical

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University of Denmark, for their study entitled "Impact of Wet Underwear on Thermo-regulatory Responses and Thermal Comfort in the Cold."

2003

- **Medicine** – presented jointly to Steven Stack of Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, and James Gundlach of Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, for the work "The Effect of Country Music on Suicide"

2014

- **Medicine:** Ian Humphreys, and others, for treating "uncontrollable" nosebleeds with nasal-packing-with-strips-of-cured-pork.
- **Psychology:** Peter K. Jonason, Amy Jones, and Minna Lyons, for showing that people who habitually stay up late are, on average, more self-admiring, more manipulative, and more psychopathic than those who habitually arise early in the morning.

2015

- **Diagnostic Medicine:** Diallah Karim, et al, for determining that acute appendicitis can be diagnosed by the amount of pain identified when the patient is driven over speed bumps.

2020

- **Medicine:** Nienke Vulink, Damiaan Denys and Arnoud van Loon, for diagnosing a medical condition named misophonia, which is the distress at hearing other people make chewing sounds. Misophonia is a disorder in which certain sounds trigger emotional or physiological responses to people who perceive this as unreasonable given the circumstance. Those who

have misophonia might describe it as when a sound "drives you crazy". Their reactions can range from anger and annoyance to panic.

- **Medical Education:** Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, Boris Johnson of the United Kingdom, Narendra Modi of India, Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico, Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus, Donald Trump of the United States, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey, Vladimir Putin of Russia and Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov of Turkmenistan, for using the COVID-19 pandemic to teach the world that politicians can have a more immediate effect on life and death than scientists and doctors can.
- **Psychology:** Miranda Giacomini and Nicholas Rule, for presenting a method to identify narcissists by examining their eyebrows.

2022

- **Applied Cardiology:** Eliska Prochazkova, et al, for seeking and finding evidence that, when romantic partners meet for the first time and have feelings of mutual attraction, their heart rates synchronize.

2024

- **Anatomy:** Marjolaine Willems, et al, for showing that scalp hair whorls are more likely to spiral in a counter-clockwise direction in the Southern Hemisphere compared to the Northern Hemisphere.
- **Physiology:** Takanori Takebe, for finding that several mammals can breathe through their anus.

In conclusion, the research which later on got the Ig Nobel **first make you laugh, than make you think!** 

REFERENCES

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Accessed December 2024.