
Special Section: Young Scientist Outstanding Poster Paper Award

Preface

Poster sessions can be an extremely valuable forum for scientific discussions but seldom receive the same status as oral sessions. This is unfortunate as discussions with poster authors can be much more profound than is usually possible after oral presentations and poster sessions provide a meeting point for researchers with similar interests. Therefore, there had been calls within the Hydrological Sciences section of EGS to make poster presentations more attractive. Günter Blöschl, as the President of the Hydrological Sciences Division, pursued an idea of Nicola Fohrer by establishing the Young Scientist Outstanding Poster Paper (YSOPP) awards for the EGS-AGU-EUG Joint Assembly 2003. Günter Blöschl and I decided on an appropriate procedure for selection of the award posters considering valuable comments from the technical chairs and conveners. As stated in the announcement of the YSOPP award the general aim of the award is to "... increase the general interest in the poster sessions, enhance their visibility, further improve the overall quality of the poster presentations and, most importantly, foster the excitement of young colleagues in the field".

Sixty-nine poster authors participated in the contest; all were PhD students or had received their PhD degree recently. Three judges evaluated each poster using appraisal forms with ten questions regarding scientific quality, poster design and ability to answer questions. Thanks to the efforts of all participating judges and conveners a high return rate of appraisal forms was achieved. In the judging, no poster was missed and at least 2 appraisal forms were completed for 91% of the 69 posters and 3 for 68%. Additionally, I saw all posters and talked to most poster authors (which was an enjoyable experience indeed). Based on the points given by the judges, a jury of the chairs of the technical committees and myself selected the five award posters.

The five award winners were announced in the official bulletin of the European Geosciences Union (Newsletter - the eggs, issue 4, 2003, June 2003), the weekly newspaper of the American Geophysical Union (EOS, vol. 84(38), p.379) and on the website of the EGS-AGU-EUG Joint

Assembly (<http://www.copernicus.org/EGS/egsga/nice03/ysopp.htm>). The posters were also published on the website as pdf-files. Each awardee was invited to submit a paper to HESS and four accepted this invitation. The research areas of the award winners covered an amazingly wide range of hydrological issues:

- Andreas Bayer used an x-ray tomography system to measure directly the water characteristics of porous media in a soil column. The ability to obtain detailed information on water retention in the near-saturated range is of great interest for flow and transport simulations close to saturation.
- Pierre Deschamps studied the migration of naturally occurring radio nuclides in deep geological formations to evaluate the safety of the nuclear waste repository in such formations. His observations of $^{234}\text{U}/^{238}\text{U}$ disequilibria in deep limestone formations give insights into the mechanisms of uranium transport.
- Richard Keim used a stochastic approach to quantify the throughfall rates during extreme precipitation events. Coupling a stochastic model of rainfall rates with a stochastic description of the transfer through the canopy allowed the reducing effect of the canopy on precipitation rates to be quantified.
- Véronique Naudet used geoelectrical methods to map the spatial extent of the contaminant plume originating from waste in a landfill. Using redox potential maps based on measurements of self-potential as well as of electrical conductivity allows delineation of the contaminant plume without the need for excessive groundwater sampling which would require a large number of wells.
- The fifth award-winning poster entitled "Large scale sandbox experiments on dispersion and mixing" was presented by Arifur Rahman and will be published elsewhere.

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