IConS of SCARF – Young Researcher Award Guidelines

The selection for the Young Researcher Award will take place in two phases. In the first phase, all submissions will be screened to assess eligibility, completeness, and the overall quality of the proposal. Shortlisted candidates from this round will be invited to make an oral presentation of their work before a panel of judges. The second phase will consist of these oral presentations, which will form the basis for the final evaluation. The final selection will be made considering the quality of the research, clarity of presentation, and the potential impact of the work. All applicants will be informed of the outcome at each stage of the process.

Eligibility

1. The award is open to postgraduate students and recent graduates from mental health disciplines such as psychiatry, psychology, psychiatric social work, and psychiatric nursing. Researchers from other fields may also be considered if their work is related to mental health—for example, those from medicine and allied health sciences, or professionals whose research or practice contributes to the understanding or advancement of mental health.
2. The upper age limit is 35 years as of January 1, 2026.
3. The applicant must be the first author and principal investigator of the paper.
4. A maximum of three authors may be listed; the award will be given only to the first author.

Scope of Submissions

1. **Originality**

a. Only original, unpublished research papers are eligible.

b. The study should present original findings based on systematic and well-designed research. Authors are also required to include a brief note (up to 75 words) following the abstract, highlighting the contribution and relevance of the work to the field.

c. Papers must not have been published, presented, or submitted elsewhere.
d. All submissions will be screened for plagiarism.

e. Authors must declare the use of generative AI in the manuscript preparation process.

2. Acceptable Study Types

Using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method designs, studies may include:
a. Experimental or outcome studies
b. Randomized controlled trials
c. Cohort and case–control studies
d. Surveys (with response rates of 70% or higher)
e. Epidemiological or diagnostic studies
f. Intervention studies
g. Cost-effectiveness or health economics analyses

3. Thesis Work

a. Research that forms part of a Master's or PhD thesis is acceptable, provided it has not been published or submitted elsewhere.

b. This should be clearly mentioned in the submission cover letter.

4. Authorship and Project Independence

Papers should not be part of a large, multi-site, externally funded project where the submitting authors are not the primary investigators or where publication rights are restricted.

Ethical and Reporting Standards

All research must have prior approval from an Ethics Committee or Institutional Review Board, and this must be stated in the Methods section of the paper. Clinical trials must be registered in a public trial registry if conducted after 2014. Authors must follow the appropriate EQUATOR reporting guidelines: the CONSORT checklist for clinical trials, the PRISMA checklist for meta-analyses of clinical trials, and the MOOSE checklist for meta-analyses of observational studies. All papers should clearly mention funding sources, if any, and declare any conflicts of interest.

Manuscript Preparation

All manuscripts should be in English. Manuscripts must be prepared according to the Indian Journal of Psychiatry (IJP) format. The paper should be typed in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins on all sides.

The title page should include the type of manuscript (Original Research Paper), a concise and informative title not exceeding 20 words, and a short running title not exceeding 50 characters. It should list the full names and institutional affiliations of all authors, the departments and institutions to which the work is attributed, and the name and contact details (address, phone number, and email) of the corresponding author. The total number of pages, tables, figures, and the word count for both the abstract and main text should also be provided. Acknowledgements for technical or financial support and details of prior presentations, if any, should be included.

The abstract should be structured and limited to 250 words. It should summarise the background, aim, methods, results, and conclusion. Three to six keywords should appear below the abstract.

The main text should not exceed 3,500 words, excluding the abstract, tables, figures, acknowledgements, and references. It should include the sections: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, Acknowledgment (if any), and References. The Discussion section must include a paragraph on the limitations of the study. Results should be presented logically without repeating data already shown in tables or figures. A maximum of five tables and figures (combined) and up to forty references are allowed. References should follow the Vancouver style, numbered in the order of citation in the text, with journal titles abbreviated according to Index Medicus.

Submission Details

Manuscripts should be submitted as a Word (.docx) file named in the format YRA_FirstName_LastName.docx. Along with the manuscript, the following documents must be uploaded: The Ethics Committee or IRB approval letter, a declaration of originality, a disclosure of funding and conflict of interest, and proof of age in the form of an Aadhaar card.

All entries must be submitted by 11:59 PM (IST) on April 30, 2026. Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered. Decision on the acceptance of the paper for presentation at the IConS conference in August 2026 will be communicated to authors via email before May 20, 2026 .

Participation

Authors shortlisted for the Young Researcher Award presentation are required to register for the conference once their abstract has been accepted. Registration must be completed no later than the close of the registration period on May 31, 2026.

Review and Selection

All papers will undergo peer review by the IConS Scientific Committee. Evaluation will be based on scientific quality, methodological rigor,

originality, clarity of presentation, and relevance to mental health research or practice. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to present their papers orally during IConS 2026, and the presentations will be evaluated by an independent jury of senior researchers.

Award

The Young Researcher Award will be presented to the author of the best paper, judged on scientific merit, quality of presentation, innovation, and potential impact. The award includes a cash prize, certificate of merit and formal recognition during the valedictory session of IConS 2026.

Disqualification Clause

Papers that fail to meet ethical, originality, or authorship requirements will be disqualified. Decisions made by the IconS Scientific Committee will be final and binding.

Contact

For queries or technical assistance, contact the IConS Secretariat at iconsofscarf@scarfindia.org or visit www.iconsofscarf.org for updates and detailed submission instructions.