

IASP Launches New Awards to Recognise Global Impact and Innovation in Suicide Prevention

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WASHINGTON DC, DC, UNITED STATES, June 23, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The International Association for Suicide Prevention ([IASP](#)) [celebrated the recipients of its 2025 awards](#) at a special ceremony held during the 33rd IASP World Congress in Vienna. Marking the organisation's 65th anniversary, this year's awards placed particular emphasis on global representation, with the introduction of two new honours designed to recognise leadership, innovation, and cross-sector collaboration.

Among them, the Lakshmi Vijayakumar Rising Star Award for Impact and Innovation was established to recognise early to mid-career professionals who have made notable contributions to suicide prevention across research, policy, practice, and community sectors. Named in honour of Dr Lakshmi Vijayakumar — an IASP Past Vice President and a pioneering psychiatrist from India — the award reflects IASP's growing commitment to promoting work that originates in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where the burden of suicide is often greatest and resources for prevention are limited.

Dr Lakshmi was the first IASP Board Member elected from an LMIC, and has long championed inclusive, culturally relevant approaches to suicide prevention in regions where access to mental health support is limited and suicide remains heavily stigmatised. Her work spans government and community, clinical practice and volunteer service. She is the founder of SNEHA, a suicide prevention NGO in Chennai that has provided crisis support for nearly 40 years and now also supports those bereaved by suicide.

Dr Lakshmi and the SNEHA team played a critical role in responding to the 2001 Gujarat earthquake and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami—delivering care in the most challenging of circumstances and using these experiences to inform long-term community-based research, surveillance, and advocacy. Her work helped shape India's national suicide prevention strategy and supported efforts to decriminalise suicide in the country.

While many awards exist across global health and mental health, few are named after living women from LMICs, and even fewer aim to highlight leadership and innovation emerging from these regions. The Lakshmi Vijayakumar Rising Star Award seeks to help address this

gap—providing a platform to elevate diverse perspectives and celebrate cross-sectoral approaches that are often under-recognised in international settings.

IASP President Professor Jo Robinson said:

"Dr Lakshmi has contributed enormously to the suicide prevention field, not only through her work in India, but also globally through her decades of service to IASP. This new award recognises her legacy and aims to encourage the next generation of leaders whose work is innovative, impactful, and grounded in real-world needs."

The inaugural recipient of the award was Assistant Professor Yunyu Xiao, recognised for her innovative work in data science and health disparities in suicide prevention.

The Rising Star Award is part of a wider portfolio of IASP awards celebrating excellence in research, lived experience, bereavement, and service. Other recipients this year represented diverse regions and disciplines, with awardees from Sri Lanka, the UK, US, Australia, New Zealand, and Switzerland.

Nominations for the 2027 awards will open ahead of the next IASP World Congress. More information is available at www.iasp.info.

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