

# Healthy People

## Smallpox, Indoor Tanning Research Win Science Awards For Teens

(NAPSA)—Research projects about smallpox vaccination policies and indoor tanning by teenagers took top honors at the first-ever Young Epidemiology Scholars (YES) Competition.

High school students Benjamin Eidelson of Merion Station, Pa., and Robert Levine of Lincolnshire, Ill., each earned \$50,000 scholarships as first-place winners in the contest, which is supported by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and administered by the College Board.

The YES Competition is designed to spur students' interest in epidemiology, the scientific method used to investigate, analyze and prevent or control a health problem in a population. The 60 students who competed in the finals—held in the nation's capital—were chosen from nearly 600 entries nationwide. In all, nearly half a million dollars in scholarships were awarded to 123 students throughout the course of regional and national competition.

"In a world facing public health threats that range from the alarming increase in childhood obesity to potential acts of bioterrorism, the need for skilled epidemiologists and a strong public health force has never been more apparent," said Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, MD, MBA, president and CEO of RWJF. "These talented scholars have the potential to protect and improve the health of our nation."

Eidelson, who attends Akiba Hebrew Academy, developed a



**From smallpox to indoor tanning, student researchers are exploring a variety of health concerns.**

mathematical model to evaluate the effects of different smallpox vaccination strategies, based on data from previous outbreaks of smallpox. He found that mass vaccination before an outbreak typically resulted in significantly fewer infections than vaccinations after an outbreak, but that the two strategies were equal in their ability to eliminate the virus from the population within five months.

Levine, who attends Adlai E. Stevenson High School, conducted a random sample of students at a Midwestern high school to learn about their practices and attitudes about indoor tanning. He found 24 percent of the students tanned indoors, even though 92 percent believed that indoor tanning was unhealthy.

Two second-place winners each received a \$35,000 scholarship,

and two third-place winners each received a \$20,000 scholarship. In addition, a \$15,000 scholarship was awarded to each of six national finalists.

The national winners were chosen by a panel of nine judges that included some of the nation's top epidemiologists, as well as high school teachers and curriculum developers. While the competition focuses on epidemiology, YES seeks to develop skills that go beyond just that area of study.

### Second annual competition

As part of the second annual YES competition, up to 60 students will receive an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. to compete at a national event to be held April 8-11, 2005. Finalists will be judged on the basis of their written research project reports, as well as an oral presentation and question-and-answer session.

The competition will award as much as \$456,000 in college scholarships to 120 high school juniors and seniors, with the top two national winners each receiving a \$50,000 college scholarship.

To enter the competition, students must register online at [www.collegeboard.com/yes](http://www.collegeboard.com/yes) and upload a written report of their research project. The deadline for registration and uploading or projects is February 1, 2005.

For more information, students can send an e-mail to [yes@collegeboard.org](mailto:yes@collegeboard.org) or call 800-626-9795 ext. 5932 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Eastern Time.