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Cardiff Met student awarded European College of Sport Science Young Investigator Award

02/08/2014 05:00

Cardiff Met PhD student Mike Stembridge has beaten 500 other applicants to scoop a top European award and will now progress to The Japanese Society of Physical Fitness and Sports Medicine conference in September.

Mike, who specialises in the effect of high altitude on cardiac function in lowlanders and high altitude natives, presented his paper at the Annual Congress of the European College of Sport Science and was awarded €4,000 for winning the Young Investigator Award. He was selected in the top four who then presented to the entire conference before being announced as the winner following questioning from the Scientific Board.

Cardiff Met student Mike Stembridge in the Himalayas

Mike's interest in cardiovascular physiology began three and a half years ago and he has since taken part in a multi-national expedition to the Himalayas, in 2012, where he was able to collect data for his research on how the heart adapts to short-term and life-long high altitude exposure. He also has particular interest in the Sherpa population and how their physiology has uniquely adapted to life above 3500 m.

He said: "It was a huge honour to be considered and shortlisted for this award, let alone to win it. The aim of this particular part of our work was to further understand how the heart copes with exercise at high altitude, as this is a common component of life in the mountains. The good news is, despite structural changes to the left ventricle, the pumping action of the heart is rather well maintained during exercise."

He plans on putting his prize money towards visiting fellow collaborators around the globe and travelling on future expeditions to Tibet, South America and Ethiopia in the next five years.

The Pyramid International Laboratory-Observatory at the foot of Mount Everest, where Mike Stembridge and his team carried out their research