



Original research wins 'origin' medal

DOCTOR Kurinji Kannan must have been wearing a maroon lab coat when she undertook her research last year – the Townsville doctor has just scored what's been described as the "State of Origin" in medical awards.

Professor Ajay Rane, who won the prestigious Dr Christopher Kohlenberg medal for original research in urogynaecology in 2000, described the annual competition for the medal as as intense as State of Origin football.

"The State of Origin is generally agreed to be the inspiration among the obstetrics and gynaecology registrars and young fellows from New South Wales and

Queensland in competing for this medal," he said.

The medal was instituted in memory of Dr Christopher Kohlenberg, a renowned Australian gynaecologist who was killed in a plane crash while returning from Fiji on July 24, 1999 after carrying out aid work for AusAid.

Dr Kannan is the second Townsville presenter of original research to win the medal since 2000.

Prof Rane said Dr Kannan was a unanimous winner for her research work, which tested three types of mesh currently used in gynaecological surgery on rats at James Cook University's animal lab.

"We tested three different types of surgical mesh –

synthetic, biological and hybrid – currently used in surgical repair of uterine, bladder and bowel prolapse using an animal model to evaluate integration with body tissue," Dr Kannan said.

"Women are generally advised six weeks' full rest before returning to work or resuming normal activity following prolapse surgery involving mesh.

"The results from the scientific experiment enhances our understanding of tissue integration and will have implications towards our efforts to hasten recovery times for women in the future."

— ALEXIS GILLHAM



INTENSE . . . Townsville Hospital urogynaecologist Dr Kurinji Kannan won a major medal for original research in urogynaecology

Photo: IAN HITCHOCK