Wyeth Australia has been a valued partner with the Medical Journal of Australia since 1995 in recognising and rewarding the best of original research published each year in the Journal.

The 2009 MJA/Wyeth Award was presented at the Australian Medical Association (AMA) National Conference in Sydney on 28 May 2010.

The Journal’s Content Review Committee has awarded the prize for 2009 to Tanya Bubner and her colleagues from the University of Adelaide and Flinders University for their research paper, “Effectiveness of point-of-care testing for therapeutic control of chronic conditions: results from the PoCT in General Practice Trial”, published in the 1 June 2009 issue of the Journal.

Point-of-care testing (PoCT) provides the treating general practitioner with immediate test results and has the potential to improve monitoring of chronic conditions, therapeutic control and clinical efficiency, and to enhance clinical decision making within the time frame of the consultation. PoCT not only provides an alternative method of pathology testing, but also allows a different style of patient management compared with traditional pathology laboratory testing. Demand for PoCT in general practice is increasing; however, there is little evidence about its benefits, particularly those related to clinical outcomes.

Bubner and colleagues assessed the safety, clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of and satisfaction with PoCT in general practice. In a large, multicentre, cluster randomised controlled trial, they found that PoCT was equivalent to pathology laboratory testing for a variety of pathology tests in chronic diseases.

The researchers found that for the proportion of patients with results in the target range, PoCT was equivalent to pathology laboratory testing for measuring glycated haemoglobin, urine albumin, albumin–creatinine ratio, total cholesterol and triglyceride levels, but not for high-density lipoprotein cholesterol level and international normalised ratio.

The research by Bubner and colleagues provides important evidence for the introduction of PoCT into general practice.

The award was presented by Ms Yvonne Bowyer, Deputy Managing Director, Wyeth Australia. I thank her on behalf of the AMA and the Australasian Medical Publishing Company, the publisher of the MJA, for Wyeth’s continuing commitment to promoting excellence in Australian clinical research through the prestigious MJA/Wyeth Award.

Dr Martin B Van Der Weyden, MJA