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First Edition of the Best Undergraduate Final-Year Project Award at ISPITS Oujda: Promoting Excellence in Nursing Sciences and Health Techniques

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Abstract:

This academic event report describes the first edition of the Best Undergraduate Final-Year Project Award organized by the Higher Institute of Nursing Professions and Health Techniques of Oujda (ISPITS Oujda) on 2 June 2026. The competition targeted final-year projects defended in 2025 by former undergraduate students already appointed to healthcare structures. Among 89 final-year projects, 19 met the eligibility criteria and underwent preliminary scientific evaluation using a standardized grid. Six projects were selected for the final stage, and five were effectively presented before a seven-member final jury. Three projects received the First, Second, and Third Prizes, while a Public Choice Award was attributed through audience voting. The First Prize was awarded to Oudahmane Rime and Chiguer Douae for "Evaluation of the Antidiabetic and Phytochemical Properties of Selected Plants from Eastern Morocco." The ceremony gathered approximately 130 participants, including research professors, permanent teachers, administrative and technical staff, students, jury members, organizing committee members, and graduates of ISPITS Oujda. This pioneering initiative strengthened academic excellence, applied research, alumni engagement, and scientific communication in nursing sciences and health techniques.

Keywords: Final-year project; nursing sciences; health techniques; academic competition; ISPITS Oujda; Morocco

I. Introduction

Undergraduate final-year projects represent a key component of competency-based training within institutions dedicated to nursing sciences and health techniques. They provide students with an opportunity to mobilize theoretical knowledge, develop methodological skills, analyze field-related problems, and propose evidence-

informed solutions relevant to healthcare practice. In this context, promoting high-quality final-year projects is essential for strengthening research culture and improving the academic and professional preparation of future healthcare professionals.

At the national level, this initiative is consistent with Morocco's strategic orientations for higher education, scientific research, and innovation. The National Plan for Accelerating the Transformation of the Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation Ecosystem (PACTE ESRI 2030) emphasizes the transformation of the higher education and research ecosystem toward greater competitiveness, inclusion, innovation, and responsiveness to national development needs (Benhima, 2025). Similarly, the Moroccan national innovation system places scientific research, innovation, cooperation, and governance among the key levers for improving the performance and visibility of the higher education sector (Hamidi & Benabdeljalil, 2013).

The promotion of student research in health training institutions is also supported by recent analyses of the Moroccan scientific research landscape. Baakir and Ellioua (2025) highlighted notable developments in national scientific activity, while emphasizing the need to strengthen cooperation between academic research and applied sectors in order to support innovation and foster a knowledge-based economy. In this perspective, initiatives that encourage undergraduate research, scientific communication, and the valorization of academic work can contribute to reinforcing the visibility, usefulness, and institutional impact of scientific production in health sciences education. In the health sector, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection has also highlighted the strategic importance of training and skills development for healthcare professionals, particularly through national continuing training initiatives aimed at improving professional competence and health system performance (Ministry of Health and Social Protection, 2019).

Within this policy context, the Best Final-Year Project Award organized by the Higher Institute of Nursing Professions and Health Techniques of Oujda can be viewed as a practical institutional mechanism for translating national orientations into local academic action. The initiative emerged within the Directorate of Scientific Research, Continuing Education and Cooperation, where the initial idea of valuing undergraduate final-year projects was progressively transformed into a structured scientific recognition process based on rigorous and standardized evaluation. This transition from a simple valorization initiative to an academically framed competition gave rise to the first edition of the event.

The Directorate played a central role in the conceptualization and planning of the competition. Several working meetings were organized to define the objectives, eligibility criteria, evaluation procedures, organizational arrangements, and scientific framework of the event. As this was the first edition, the preparation required substantial coordination and methodological work in order to ensure credibility, transparency, and institutional coherence. An Organizing Committee was subsequently established to operationalize the initiative and support its implementation from the initial concept to the successful organization of the final ceremony.

On 2 June 2026, the Higher Institute of Nursing Professions and Health Techniques of Oujda organized the final ceremony of the first edition of the Best Final-Year Project Award, Cycle Licence, Edition 2026. The competition concerned final-year projects defended during the 2025 academic year and was specifically open to former students and graduates of ISPITS Oujda. These laureates had already been assigned to professional

positions in health structures, which gave the event an additional professional dimension by reconnecting the institute with its alumni and with practicing nurses and health technicians.

Beyond the recognition of student research, the event was designed to promote scientific research not only among current ISPITS students but also among nursing and health technician personnel working in healthcare institutions. In this sense, the competition created a bridge between initial training, professional practice, alumni engagement, and the continuous promotion of scientific inquiry within the healthcare workforce. It also offered current students an opportunity to observe scientific presentations, develop their interest in scientific communication, and be encouraged to participate in future editions.

This first edition was particularly significant, as it marked the launch of the Best Final-Year Project Award at ISPITS Oujda. It also constituted, to the best of the organizers' knowledge, the first national initiative of this kind among the Higher Institutes of Nursing Professions and Health Techniques in Morocco.

The main objective of the event was to promote academic excellence, applied research, and scientific communication among undergraduate students, ISPITS alumni, and healthcare professionals trained in nursing and health techniques. More specifically, the award aimed to recognize the best final-year projects defended during the 2025 academic year, encourage methodological rigor, and strengthen research culture within ISPITS Oujda and among its graduates. It also sought to consolidate institutional links with alumni already engaged in professional practice, raise research awareness among practicing nurses and health technicians, and foster innovation, critical thinking, and oral scientific communication skills. By linking academic training, field-based practice, and healthcare system needs, the initiative was also intended to motivate current ISPITS students to participate actively in future editions.

II. Methods

This manuscript was designed as an academic event report describing the organization, evaluation process, outcomes, and institutional significance of the first edition of the Best Final-Year Project Award at ISPITS Oujda. It was based on institutional documents related to the competition, eligibility criteria, submission procedures, evaluation grids, digital platform management, jury outcomes, and attendance data.

The final ceremony was held on 2 June 2026 at the Higher Institute of Nursing Professions and Health Techniques of Oujda, Morocco. The competition targeted former undergraduate students of ISPITS Oujda whose final-year projects had been defended during the 2025 academic year and had obtained a grade of 16/20 or higher.

The competition followed a three-stage process. First, eligibility screening was conducted; among 89 final-year projects defended in 2025, 19 met the submission requirements. Second, eligible projects underwent preliminary scientific evaluation by a dedicated committee, with each project assessed by two evaluators using a standardized grid covering originality, methodological rigor, practical relevance, manuscript quality, and valorization potential. Third, six projects were selected for the final stage and evaluated through oral presentations before a seven-member final jury; five were effectively presented during the ceremony.

The submission and evaluation workflow was managed through a dedicated digital platform, which enabled candidate submission, verification of files, integrated evaluation grids, computerized scoring, and ranking of

projects. Reported outcomes included the number of submitted, selected, and presented projects, the awarded prizes, the Public Choice Award, and the estimated attendance of approximately 130 participants.

a. Event Coordination and Committees

Under the leadership of the Director of ISPITS Oujda, Mr. Bouterfass Nouredine, and the Director of Scientific Research, Continuing Education and Cooperation (SRCTC), Pr. Rahhou Ilyesse, the first edition of the "Best Final-Year Project Award" was organized through a coordinated institutional approach. It was conducted under the general coordination of Ouahbi Nawal (Head of the Scientific Research Unit), with the contribution of Mouloudi Ibrahim (Head of the Cooperation Unit), Ba-aqqa Zahra (Head of the Continuing Education Unit), Chelfi Tarik (Research Professor, Coordinator of the Nursing Care Program), and Kaddouri Mohammed (Research Professor, Coordinator of the Health Techniques Program) as event coordinators. This coordination framework was essential to the conceptualization, planning, and successful implementation of this pioneering initiative.

i. Organizing committee

The organizing committee included members of the ISPITS Oujda community who contributed to the preparation and success of the event. Their contribution covered the administrative, logistical, scientific, communication, and ceremonial components of the competition.

ii. Preliminary Evaluation Committee

The Preliminary Evaluation Committee was constituted from members of the Organizing Committee and was responsible for assessing the submitted final-year projects. Chaired by Professor Kaddouri Mohammed, this committee had a dual mission. First, it was responsible for developing and validating the standardized evaluation grid used for the preliminary assessment. Second, it conducted the scientific and methodological evaluation of the submitted projects.

Each submitted final-year project was independently assessed by two members of the Preliminary Evaluation Committee. This approach aimed to strengthen the objectivity, consistency, and fairness of the evaluation process, while ensuring that all projects were reviewed according to the same predefined scientific and methodological criteria.

iii. Final jury committee

The final jury was composed of seven members and was chaired by Bouterfass Noureddine, Director of ISPITS Oujda. It included Rahhou Ilyasse, Director of SRCTC, as well as Bellakhdar Aoutaif, Elajroudi Ouafae, Elmahi Sara, Elbakkouri Samira, and Hammoudi Jamila. The jury brought together research professors and permanent teachers from different academic and professional backgrounds within the institute. It was responsible for the scientific and methodological assessment of the finalist presentations and for the designation of the award-winning projects.

b. Competition Procedure

The competition was organized through a structured multi-stage process designed to ensure transparency, fairness, methodological rigor, and scientific credibility. It targeted undergraduate final-year projects defended during the 2025 academic year by former students and laureates of ISPITS Oujda (figure 1).

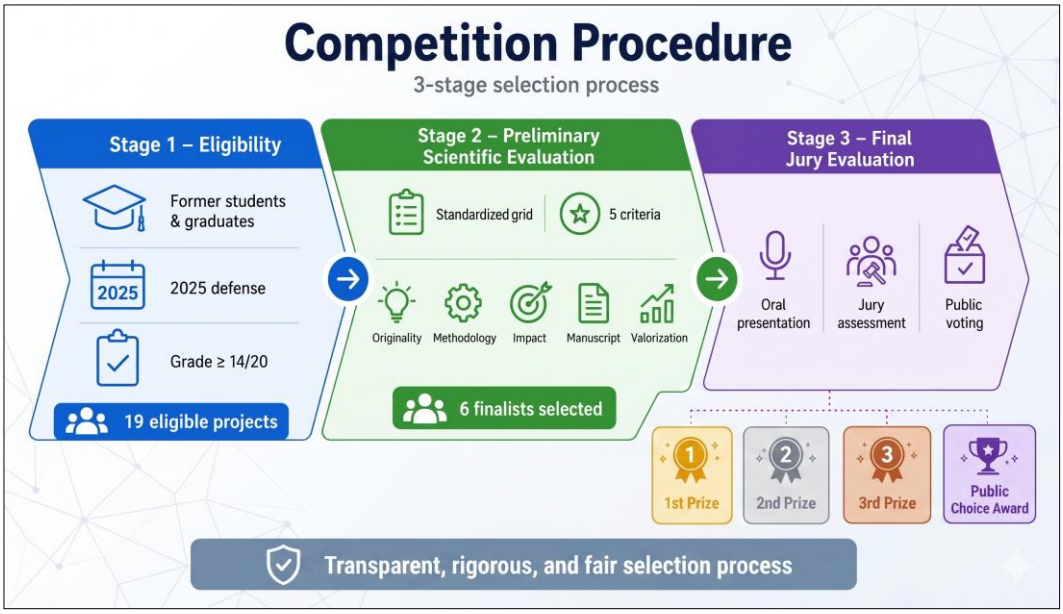

Figure 1: Competition Procedure and Scientific Evaluation Process

A call for participation was first launched for eligible graduates whose final-year projects had been defended and validated in 2025. Candidates were invited to submit their applications through the official submission procedure, including the final version of the project, a project summary, and the required administrative and academic documents.

The submission and evaluation process was managed through a dedicated digital platform developed for the competition (https://ispitsobestpfe26.web.app/). This platform provided an integrated computerized system for managing the Best Final-Year Project Award, covering candidate submissions, eligibility verification, preliminary evaluation, final jury assessment, scoring, and ranking (Figure 2).

Candidates submitted their application files through the platform according to the predefined eligibility and submission criteria. The Organizing Committee used the system to verify the completeness and conformity of the submitted files before forwarding eligible projects to the preliminary evaluation stage. Both the Preliminary Evaluation Committee and the final jury used dedicated individual accounts to access the platform and assess the assigned projects. Through these secure accounts, jury members were able to evaluate the projects using standardized assessment grids directly integrated into the system.

The platform enabled the computerized recording of evaluation scores and facilitated the automatic calculation of grades according to the predefined grids. It also supported the ranking of candidates

based on the evaluation results, thereby reducing manual processing and strengthening the reliability of the assessment workflow. Overall, this digital management system ensured a structured process from submission to final assessment and reinforced transparency, standardization, traceability, and scientific rigor throughout the competition.

Among the 154 final-year projects defended during the 2025 academic year, 19 met the predefined submission requirements and were accepted for preliminary scientific evaluation. This evaluation was based on a standardized assessment grid and aimed to ensure an objective and homogeneous appraisal of the scientific quality, methodological rigor, relevance of the topic, structure of the manuscript, and potential contribution of each project to health sciences education and practice. Each submitted project was independently assessed by two evaluators, thereby strengthening objectivity, fairness, consistency, and comparability across submissions.

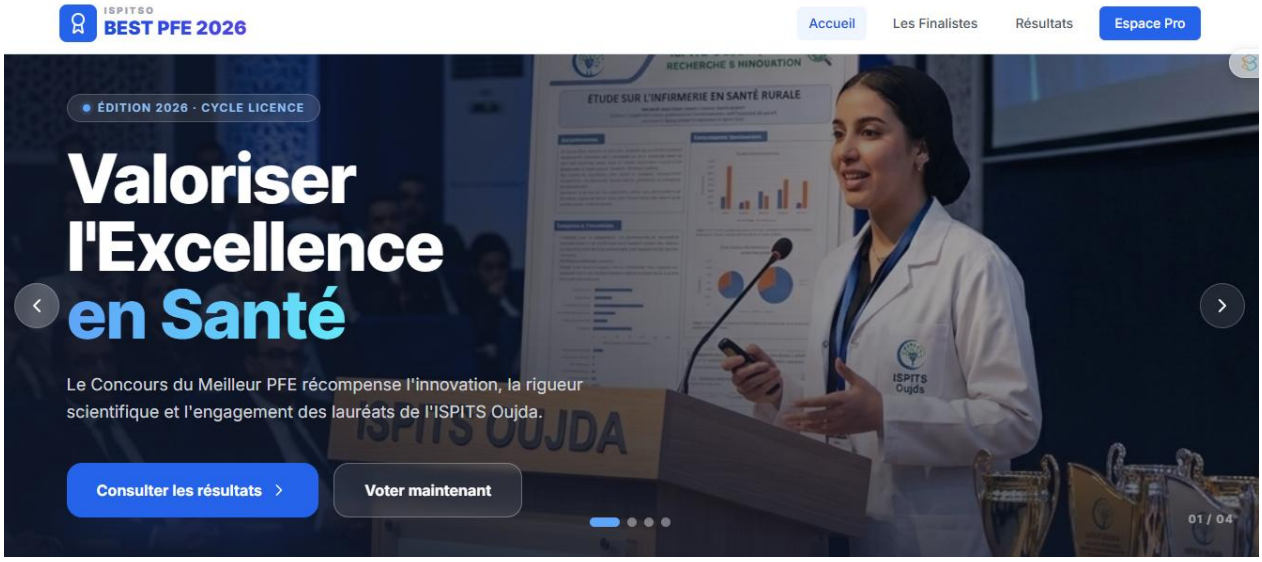

Figure 2: Digital platform of the Best Final-Year Project Award at ISPITS Oujda (https://ispitsobestpfe26.web.app/)

Following this preliminary manuscript-based evaluation, six final-year projects were selected for the final stage of the competition. These projects represented the highest-ranked submissions and were invited to be presented during the official final ceremony held at ISPITS Oujda. During this stage, finalist candidates or candidate teams delivered oral presentations summarizing the background, objectives, methodology, main findings, and relevance of their projects. Each presentation was limited to a maximum of 15 minutes and was delivered before the final jury and the attending audience.

Although six projects were initially selected for the final stage, five were effectively presented during the final ceremony, as one finalist project was not represented on the day of the event. The final jury assessed the scientific quality, methodological coherence, relevance of the topic, clarity of the oral presentation, and the candidates' ability to communicate and defend their work. After deliberation,

the three best projects were ranked and awarded the First Prize, Second Prize, and Third Prize of the Best Final-Year Project Award.

In parallel with the scientific ranking established by the final jury, a Public Choice Award was organized through audience voting. This distinction was separate from the jury-based evaluation and aimed to recognize the quality of oral communication, the clarity of the message, the ability to popularize scientific content, and the perceived impact of the presented work among participants.

Overall, the competition combined eligibility screening, standardized manuscript-based evaluation, oral scientific communication, jury deliberation, and audience participation. This structured process contributed to promoting academic excellence, methodological quality, transparency, and engagement in applied health sciences research among graduates, current students, and healthcare professionals.

III. Result

a. Flow of projects through the competition

For this first edition, among 154 final-year projects defended in 2025, 19 projects met the predefined submission requirements and were therefore considered eligible for preliminary scientific evaluation. Each eligible project was assessed by two faculty evaluators using a standardized evaluation grid.

Based on the preliminary evaluation results, six final-year projects were selected for the final stage of the competition. These finalist projects represented the highest-ranked submissions and were invited to present their work during the official final ceremony held at ISPITS Oujda. Although six projects were initially selected, five were effectively presented during the final ceremony because one finalist project was not represented on the day of the event.

b. Projects Selected for the Final Stage

The preliminary evaluation process resulted in the selection of six final-year projects for the final stage of the competition. These projects represented the highest-ranked submissions among the eligible projects assessed by the Preliminary Evaluation Committee. They covered diverse and innovative themes related to nursing education, artificial intelligence, bioinformatics, virtual reality, intensive care, and phytochemical research.

Although six projects were selected for the final stage, five were effectively presented during the final ceremony, as one finalist project was not represented on the day of the event. The selected projects are presented in Table 1. In addition to the scientific prizes, symbolic recognition awards were presented by the administration of ISPITS Oujda to the award-winning candidates in

acknowledgment of their academic effort, scientific engagement, and participation in the competition (table 2, figure 3).

Table 2. Finalist projects, final-stage status, and awards

Project title	Authors	Final-stage status	Award / recognition
Evaluation of the Antidiabetic and Phytochemical Properties of Selected Plants from Eastern Morocco	Oudahmane Rime; Chiguer Douae	Presented	First Prize
Bioinformatics Approach: Analysis of INS Gene Mutations and Their Impact on Insulin Conformation and Function	Ajebli Anas; El Hari Hafsa	Presented	Second Prize
The Use of Artificial Intelligence among Fourth-Semester General Nursing Students at ISPITSO and Its Effects on Their Academic Performance	El Baz Maroua; Mouzazi Afaf; Benachour Mohammed	Presented	Third Prize
Virtual Reality for Patients Undergoing Spinal Anesthesia at the Al Farabi Regional Hospital Center of Oujda	Yousfi Romayssae; Touil Hasnae; Elbarhdadi Youssef	Presented	Public Choice Award
Interest of Artificial Intelligence in the Academic Performance of Students at ISPITSO	Khattabi Safae; Zouhir Karima; Lahfa Abdelkhaled	Presented	RAS
Retrospective Analysis of Biological and Clinical Parameters of Patients in the Intensive Care Unit of Mohammed VI University Hospital Center of Oujda	Et-Toumy Soukaina; Berrichi Salma	Not represented on the final ceremony	RAS

Figure 3: Selected moments from the final ceremony of the first Best Undergraduate Final-Year Project Award at ISPITS Oujda

1.1. Participants and Attendance

The final ceremony gathered approximately 130 participants, including research professors, permanent teachers, administrative and technical staff of ISPITS Oujda, students of ISPITS Oujda, members of the Organizing Committee, members of the Preliminary Evaluation Committee, the final jury, and ISPITS Oujda graduates. The presence of current students and former graduates contributed

to strengthening the institutional link between the institute and its alumni, many of whom had already been assigned to healthcare facilities and participated in the competition through their final-year projects defended in 2025.

This broad attendance reflected the importance of the event beyond the academic setting. In addition to promoting scientific research among students, the ceremony contributed to raising awareness of research culture among practicing nurses and health technicians working in healthcare structures. It also provided current students with an opportunity to attend scientific presentations, develop their interest in scientific communication, and be encouraged to participate in future editions.

c. Discussion:

The first edition of the Best Final-Year Project Award provided an institutional framework for recognizing student research and promoting excellence in undergraduate health sciences education. It also highlighted the role of faculty members, supervisors, evaluators, and institutional leadership in guiding students toward rigorous and relevant academic production.

The interest of the event extended beyond the promotion of scientific research among students. Because the competition was open to 2025 ISPITS Oujda laureates who had already joined the workforce, it also contributed to disseminating a research-oriented culture among practicing nurses and health technicians. In this regard, the initiative created continuity between the institute, its graduates, and the professional healthcare environment.

The event strengthened the institutional link with ISPITS Oujda alumni. By inviting former students to return to the institute and present projects completed during their training, the event helped consolidate a sense of belonging and encouraged continued engagement with academic and scientific activities after graduation.

For current ISPITS students, the event represented an opportunity to observe scientific communication in practice, understand the expectations of jury-based academic evaluation, and develop motivation to participate in future editions. Exposure to finalist presentations may encourage students to improve the quality of their own final-year projects and to cultivate oral presentation skills, scientific reasoning, and methodological rigor.

The integration of oral presentations and a Public Choice Award emphasized the importance of scientific communication as a core competency for healthcare professionals. The ability to present research findings clearly, defend methodological choices, and communicate results to both academic and non-specialist audiences represents an essential dimension of modern health sciences education.

The organization of this first edition may also serve as a model for future initiatives within health training institutions. By combining standardized evaluation, faculty involvement, jury-based scientific ranking, audience participation, and alumni engagement, the competition established a

structured and reproducible framework for promoting academic excellence among undergraduate students and health professionals.

a. Perspectives

The experience gained through this first edition provides a strong foundation for the institutionalization of the Best Final-Year Project Award within ISPITS Oujda. Future editions may be extended and consolidated for the undergraduate cycle in order to ensure the continuity of this academic recognition mechanism and to increase student motivation to produce high-quality final-year projects.

In the coming years, the competition could also be broadened through improved visibility, early preparation of students, and systematic integration of scientific communication training. Such development would allow students to become familiar with academic presentation standards and would encourage stronger participation in subsequent editions.

Beyond its local institutional scope, this first initiative could also pave the way for the creation of a national Best Final-Year Project Award involving the different ISPITS institutions across Morocco. Organized on an annual basis, such a national competition could promote inter-institutional exchange, cooperation, and scientific emulation among ISPITS students, graduates, faculty members, and healthcare professionals. It would also contribute to enhancing the visibility of undergraduate research in nursing sciences and health techniques at the national level.

A further perspective is the creation of a first edition dedicated to Master's dissertations. This extension would allow the institute to valorize research production across different levels of training, from undergraduate final-year projects to graduate-level academic work. It would also help establish a coherent pathway for promoting research, innovation, and scientific excellence throughout the academic progression of students and professionals.

Finally, the continued involvement of ISPITS alumni, practicing nurses, health technicians, research professors, permanent teachers, and administrative teams may strengthen the role of the institute as a hub for academic development, professional engagement, and applied research in health sciences.

b. Strengths and limitations of the initiative

The main strengths of the initiative include the use of predefined eligibility criteria, standardized preliminary evaluation, dual assessment of each submitted project, final jury deliberation, and integration of audience participation through the Public Choice Award. These elements contributed to transparency, comparability, traceability, and fairness.

However, this first edition also had some operational limitations. One selected finalist project was not represented on the day of the final ceremony. In addition, as this was the first edition, several organizational procedures required substantial preparatory work and may be further refined in future

editions, particularly regarding early candidate preparation, communication timelines, and systematic feedback to participants.

d. Conclusion

The first edition of the Best Final-Year Project Award at ISPITS Oujda represents a significant step toward institutionalizing academic excellence and applied research within undergraduate health sciences training. By recognizing outstanding work produced by former students, promoting methodological rigor, and encouraging scientific communication, this initiative contributed to strengthening the research culture among future and current healthcare professionals.

The event also demonstrated the value of structured academic recognition mechanisms in motivating students, supporting faculty engagement, reconnecting with alumni, and enhancing the institutional visibility of final-year projects. As a pioneering initiative at the national level among ISPITS institutions, this competition may inspire similar experiences in other health training institutes and contribute to the development of a sustainable culture of research, innovation, communication, and excellence in health sciences education.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Compliance with Ethical Standards: This article does not report any studies involving human participants or animals conducted by the authors.

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