

## Meet Felix Beuschlein, our 2024 Transatlantic Alliance Awardee



Professor Felix Beuschlein, from Zürich, Switzerland, is our 2024 Transatlantic Alliance Awardee. He will deliver his Award Lecture in Stockholm at ECE 2024. Read on to learn more about his career in endocrinology, his advice for future endocrinologists, and what you can look forward to hearing him talk about at the Congress.

### **Please tell us about your current role**

Since April 2017, I have had the privilege of serving as the Director of the Clinic for Endocrinology, Diabetology and Clinical Nutrition at the University Hospital Zurich. In addition, I hold a principal investigator position at the University Hospital in Munich, Germany. These roles allow me to engage in both clinical care and endocrine research.

### **How were you inspired to work in endocrinology?**

My journey in endocrinology began after receiving my medical degree from the University of Würzburg and completing my medical training in Freiburg, Germany. My postdoctoral studies at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor clearly fuelled my passion for endocrine research. My career path led me from a professorship in endocrine research at the University of Munich to my current role at the University of Zürich. The three individuals that clearly stand out among the many interactions that I have had during my career are the late Bruno Allolio, Gary Hammer and Martin Reincke – not much can go wrong, having such great mentors!

### **What will you discuss in your Award Lecture at ECE 2024?**

Scientifically, I am interested in all aspects that relate to the adrenal gland: tumour growth and dysregulation of steroidogenesis, as well as adrenal insufficiency. In my upcoming lecture in Stockholm, I will focus particularly on primary aldosteronism – a pivotal area of my research over the past 10 years. This condition, relevant both as a very rare familial form and as a very prevalent disease in the overall hypertensive population, offers a fascinating lens through which to examine adrenal disorders.

My talk will highlight the multifaceted nature of primary aldosteronism, including functional insights into molecular mechanisms that result in aldosterone excess, and consequences of

these alterations for metabolic pathways. I will also discuss the development and implementation of strategies that enhance awareness, facilitate screening, and simplify the differential diagnosis of primary aldosteronism, with the aim of bridging the gap between advanced research and clinical practice.

**What is likely to be the next breakthrough in your area of interest?**

I believe that the next major breakthrough concerning primary aldosteronism will be the integration of advanced diagnostics using multi-steroid and multi-omics panels into clinical practice. These techniques hold the promise of significantly improving and simplifying the processes of screening and differential diagnosis, and of predicting treatment responses for affected patients. The successful translation of these advanced diagnostic tools into routine clinical use would represent a substantial leap forward.

**What are the biggest challenges in your field right now?**

A significant and ongoing challenge in our field is the inadequate screening of hypertensive patients for primary aldosteronism, particularly in high-risk groups. Despite its prevalence and impact, this condition often remains under-appreciated and under-diagnosed. Additionally, a deeper molecular and genetic understanding of the bilateral form of primary aldosteronism is needed. This knowledge is crucial for developing targeted and long term therapeutic approaches, which currently remain a gap in our treatment arsenal.

**What are you most proud of in your career, and in life in general?**

In life, I am profoundly grateful for my family's support and their active involvement in my journey, which has included numerous relocations over three countries. Professionally, I take pride in having contributed to shaping influential networks such as the European Network for the Study of Adrenal Tumors and various national and international consortia. These groups of individuals and their collaborative efforts have significantly advanced progress in the field of endocrinology, something I consider a key achievement of my career.

**What is the most enjoyable aspect of your work?**

What I find most rewarding is the exchange of ideas that often begins with unstructured discussions or brainstorming. These interactions may well evolve into the development of projects, long term collaborations and enduring friendships. I feel extremely privileged that these research interactions transcend borders, beliefs and politics, helping us find common ground for scientific progress.

**What are you most looking forward to at ECE 2024?**

I am particularly looking forward to the personal exchange with colleagues and friends. These interactions are not only professionally enriching, but also provide a sense of community that is just not achievable in front of a computer screen. Besides receiving updates from my adrenal crowd, I anticipate attending sessions outside my area of expertise. This 'session lottery' has often exposed me to state-of-the-art knowledge in fields that are more alien, which has opened new perspectives and can be surprisingly fruitful and inspiring for my own work.

**Why should people join ESE?**

Joining ESE is pivotal because of three fundamental aspects: community, networking and content. These elements are integral to endocrinology from both clinical and research perspectives. Being part of ESE provides a platform for connecting with peers, accessing cutting-edge research, and contributing to a collective knowledge base that continually shapes and advances our field.

I would be a poor Transatlantic Alliance Awardee if I failed to mention that the Endocrine Society equally champions these values. Perhaps it is time to consider the possibility of a dual-membership status between these two societies, further fostering a collaborative international endocrine community!

**What words of wisdom do you have for aspiring endocrinologists?**

For those embarking on a career in endocrinology, I would consider networking as key. Engage in as much exchange as possible with peers and mentors. Occasionally stepping out of your comfort zone to explore new possibilities can enrich your professional journey. Even if these explorations do not always result in a direct boost to your career, the experience and knowledge gained are invaluable. Embrace these opportunities with an open mind, as they often lead to unexpected and rewarding paths.