DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES,

It is our pleasure to invite you to the 55th Annual ESPE Meeting in Paris, France, on 10–12 September 2016. The meeting’s theme will be ‘Horizons in paediatric endocrinology’, to capture the evolutionary and self-renewing nature of our specialty.

The theme will also help us to evaluate the new challenges for paediatric endocrinology and to discuss medical, scientific and organisational paths, both old and new. Plenary sessions, symposia and Meet the Expert sessions will facilitate the exchange of high quality clinical information and basic science with international experts. Free communications and poster sessions will allow delegates to discuss their findings in an interactive environment, and to promote international collaboration. The number of free communications will more than double, to over 200, and the introduction of ‘mini’ free communications will encourage abstract submission.

The meeting will be held in the Palais des Congrès de Paris, close to the Place de l’Etoile and Arc de Triomphe, within the heart of the city. We are excited that ESPE is returning to Paris after over 40 years’ absence.

Nicknamed the City of Light, Paris is undeniably one of the most fascinating and captivating cities in the world, and combines the dynamic character of modern Europe with a unique architectural and artistic heritage. We hope that during your stay you will find time to visit our beautiful museums, including the Louvre and Musée d’Orsay, to relax while walking along the banks of the River Seine, and to enjoy the restaurants that make Paris such a wonderful city.

We look forward to welcoming you to Paris in 2016.

Professor Jean-Claude Carel
ESPE President 2016

Professor Agnès Linglart
Chair, Local Organising Committee

Welcome to Paris

Plenary lectures at ESPE 2016

Losing our minds: how environmental pollution impairs human intelligence and mental health
Barbara Demeneix (Paris, France)

Recent stories on the genetics of adrenal Cushing’s and tumours
Jérôme Bertherat (Paris, France)

Calcium-sensing receptor signalling in physiology and diseases
Raj Thakker (Oxford, UK)

Genomic imprinting and evolution
Robert Feil (Montpellier, France)

Genetics of common and uncommon obesity
Philippe Froguel (Lille, France/London, UK)

Cell therapy in type 1 diabetes
Bart Roep (Leiden, The Netherlands)

Welcome to issue 31

DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES,

After a successful and memorable ESPE Meeting in Barcelona, the preparations for the next ESPE Meeting – in Paris this September – have speeded up. We wish the President of the Congress, Jean-Claude Carel, and the Organising Committee every success. You can read more about the Paris 2016 ESPE Meeting on this page and in future issues of the Newsletter.

In this issue, we continue to celebrate the achievements and activities of members at ESPE 2015 last autumn. On page 7, the 2015 ESPE Henning Andersen Prize winners Jesús Argente and Sasha Howard share the details of their scientific endeavours. Could you be an ESPE prize winner in 2016? Remember to submit your abstracts by 11 April.

The ESPE Working Groups were busy as usual at the ESPE Meeting in Barcelona. The

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
Welcome continued from page 1

Co-ordinators of five of the Working Groups bring you news of their sessions on pages 4–6: Obesity (Jesús Argente), Paediatric and Adolescent Gynaecology (Lourdes Ibáñez), Disorders of Sex Development (Anna Nordenström), Bone and Growth Plate (Olá Nilsson) and Paediatric Endocrine Nurse Specialists (Christine Derycke). We are delighted to bring you the latest updates in these fields, which we are sure you will find informative.

You will also find news from the prestigious ESPE Summer School 2015 on page 3. We look forward to another stimulating ESPE Summer School this autumn.

As members will know, ESPE extends its support to paediatric endocrinologists working outside the borders of Europe. On page 3, Marc Maes shares with us his teaching experiences in the Paediatric Endocrine Training Centres for Africa. These Centres, in Nigeria and Kenya, support fellows working in a challenging environment, who are eager to learn and appreciative of your support. Could you get involved as a PETCA tutor? Turn to Dr Maes’ article to find out.

Our interviews with previous winners of the ESPE Young Investigator Award continue with Olaf Hiort on page 6. He explains the value of his award and of ESPE in shaping his career.

On page 7, you can also read news from the Belgian Society. Your colleagues would be pleased to hear more about different national societies, so please send us news from your organisation.

We were greatly saddened to hear of the untimely death of our colleague, Primus Mullis. A tribute to him appears on page 8.

Last but not least, the imminent call for the formation of European Reference Networks for rare diseases presents an exciting opportunity for paediatric endocrinology and our Society. If you would like to get involved, please read more below, and get in touch with Faisal Ahmed (faisal.ahmed@glasgow.ac.uk).

We thank all our colleagues who have contributed to this issue of the Newsletter. I am, as always, grateful to the Editorial Board members for their hard work and enthusiasm.

Yours sincerely,
Professor Feyza Darendeliler
Editor, ESPE Newsletter
feyzad@istanbul.edu.tr

SPRING IS HERE, and there is much to look forward to in the year ahead!

One of our first priorities has been to gather your views on the Society. Thank you to those of you who completed our membership survey recently. It is really important that we understand your evolving requirements as members and shape our activities to meet your needs.

We are very lucky at ESPE to have supportive and engaged members and, as always, we need you to get involved. Currently, we are seeking a convener for the Accreditation and Syllabus Project. You can see all our committee vacancies at www.eurospe.org/about/vacancies.

Please note that there are some changes this year to the ESPE Research Fellowship. You can find further details of this award on page 5, along with updates to the names of two of ESPE’s other awards.

Remember to look out for announcements of all our schools, programmes and activities in our monthly news alerts and on Facebook and Twitter.

And finally, don’t forget that it’s time to renew your ESPE membership for 2016. You should have received a unique link in your email, or you can log into the members’ area at www.eurospe.org/members. Do encourage your colleagues to join the Society as well – you can find all the details at www.eurospe.org/membership.

Hannah Bonnell, Joanne Fox-Evans and Tracey-Leigh Meadowcroft, ESPE Team

Rickets consensus published

THE ‘GLOBAL CONSENSUS ON THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF RICKETS’ was a joint initiative between all major paediatric endocrine societies worldwide, including experts from the worlds of nutrition, epidemiology, paediatrics, health economy and public health.

The recommendations have now been co-published in Hormone Research in Paediatrics and Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism. Here, the consensus group, led by Wolfgang Höglér (Birmingham, UK), has summarised all the relevant literature to date and supplied clinicians and health policymakers with all the evidence needed to properly understand and manage the condition, along with a framework to implement successful health policies and intervention programmes.

References

European Reference Network for rare endocrine conditions

ESPE MEMBERS SHOULD RECENTLY have received a statement by email from the ESPE Secretary General, Peter Clayton, with information about the imminent call for European Reference Networks (ERNs).

ESPE is working together with the European Society of Endocrinology to support and facilitate the formation of an Endocrine ERN (ENDO ERN), to cater for the full range of rare endocrine conditions from birth to adulthood.

Members who are interested in an ENDORN should contact Faisal Ahmed (faisal.ahmed@glasgow.ac.uk), ESPE Council member and Science Committee Chair. If you have not received the email from Peter Clayton, please contact the ESPE Team (espe@eurospe.org).
YOUR CHANCE TO VOLUNTEER!

Why you should be a PETCA tutor

WHY SHOULD YOU EMBARK in teaching paediatric endocrinology and diabetology in countries of limited resources? Countries where, in some circumstances, you cannot even obtain a karyotype...

The answer is straightforward: you can and will make a difference. By teaching the clinical skills to become an excellent paediatric endocrinologist, by increasing knowledge of paediatric endocrinology, you will improve the ability of others to care for children with endocrine conditions.

The immediate reward for teaching comes from the fellows. They will be grateful for whatever you teach, because they are highly motivated and eager to learn. You will realise that they work in a harsh environment where there are no facilities to aid a sophisticated diagnosis or to prescribe complicated treatment. Their willingness to become paediatric endocrinologists is evident from the sacrifice of leaving their families for several months to join the programme, and the reliance on limited financial resources.

Teaching in countries with limited resources requires a change in how you approach the diagnosis and management of the most commonly encountered endocrine conditions. This also leads you to draw a sharp comparison with practice in your home country, where the newest techniques and treatment options are readily available.

Of course, being a tutor in such circumstances requires investment of time, an open-minded approach, an adventurous spirit, and a lot of patience to deal with challenging organisational issues. But it is a joy to learn that the fellows you have trained are now local tutors of the future paediatric endocrinologists of Africa!

I have volunteered to teach three times: once in Nairobi, Kenya, and twice in Lagos, Nigeria. It has been a rich and rewarding experience. We look forward to having you join the programme! For further details, contact the ESPE PETCA (Paediatric Endocrine Training Centre for Africa) Co-ordinator, Ieuan Hughes, at iah1000@cam.ac.uk.

Marc Maes, Professor Emeritus of Paediatric Endocrinology and Diabetology, Brussels, Belgium

Book donation to PETCA

ESPE is delighted to report that the publisher Karger AG has recently donated copies of Practical Algorithms in Pediatric Endocrinology (edited by Ze’ev Hochberg, Haifa, Israel) to each of the fellows at the Paediatric Endocrine Training Centre for West Africa in Lagos, Nigeria.

ESPE Summer School 2015

28–30 September 2015, Poblet Monastery, Catalonia, Spain

THE 29TH ESPE SUMMER SCHOOL took place just before ESPE 2015 in Barcelona. The Summer School brings together paediatric endocrinologists in training and academic clinicians and scientists.

The Steering Committee developed the programme around four themes:

- puberty
- disorders of the neuroendocrine axis
- growth and genetics, and
- diabetes and obesity.

These topics were covered through state of the art lectures and interactive cases. The presentation of cases by each student is an important feature of the ESPE Summer School. The cases are initially discussed in small groups, facilitated by a faculty member, before being delivered to all the attendees. This extensive range of challenging endocrine cases led to active discussion between the students and teachers.

A total of 25 delegates represented 18 countries across 4 continents, demonstrating ESPE’s global influence. Faculty members were Nelly Pitteloud (Lausanne, Switzerland), Charles Sklar (New York, USA), Irene Netchine (Paris, France), Maite Tauber (Toulouse, France) and Ram Weiss (Jerusalem, Israel), who, together with the Summer School Steering Committee, must be thanked for their contributions. We thank Maria Clemente and her local team for superb organisation of the venue and activities.

The ESPE Summer School has been organised annually since 1987, with support throughout this time from Ferring Pharmaceuticals, which is greatly appreciated.

The 2016 Summer School will be held at Chateau le Tour, near Paris, France, on 7–9 September, just before the 55th Annual Meeting of ESPE.
Bone and Growth Plate Working Group

OUR WELL ATTENDED WORKSHOP focused on recent advances in growth disorders and childhood-onset osteoporosis. Jeffrey Baron (Bethesda, MD, USA) began the morning by laying out the framework for assessment of short stature in his talk ‘Short stature – blame the chondrocyte’. He reasoned that, since longitudinal growth is the result of chondrogenesis at the growth plates, the conceptual framework for understanding longitudinal growth and growth failure should be centred on the function of growth plates and all factors that affect growth plate function rather than the growth hormone–insulin-like growth factor-I (GH–IGF-I) axis alone.1

Francesco De Luca (Philadelphia, PA, USA) then detailed the recently discovered role of NFκB in regulation of growth. His presentation included a case of short stature due to NFκB mutation, and provided molecular evidence that a loss of function mutation in NFκB causes a rare form of growth failure characterised by GH and IGF-I resistance.

The second half of the workshop focused on metabolic bone disease. Outimaja Mäkitie (Stockholm, Sweden/Helsinki, Finland), gave an update on the genetics of juvenile-onset osteoporosis.2 Recent findings by Dr Mäkitie and others have identified new gene mutations causing early-onset osteoporosis, including mutations in LRPS causing osteoporosis–pseudoglioma syndrome. Heterozygous mutations in WNT1 cause an autosomal dominant form of osteoporosis with childhood onset, whereas homozygous mutation causes a severe osteogenesis imperfecta. In addition, mutations in PL33 have been found to cause an X-linked form of childhood-onset osteoporosis characterised by vertebral and long bone fractures and relatively good response to bisphosphonates.

Nadja Fratsl-Zelman (Vienna, Austria) then shared her insight and experience in assessing bone tissue from bone biopsies in paediatric bone disease. Finally, Maria Luisa Bianchi (Milan, Italy) provided an update on fracture risk and prevention in patients with cystic fibrosis.

Other activities

Genetics of early-onset osteoporosis
Working Group members are invited to get in touch with Outimaja Mäkitie (outi.makitie@helsinki.fi) and send samples from patients with unclear, non-osteogenesis imperfecta osteoporosis for whole exome sequencing. COL1A1 and COL1A2 mutations should be excluded first. X-ray images and detailed phenotype descriptions are helpful for selecting cases.

EuroPHP
This collaboration on pseudohypoparathyroidism previously received funding from ESPE. A new classification system is being developed. The pre-consensus meeting will be in Naples, Italy, on 9–11 November 2016. If you are involved in this area and interested in participating in the consensus meeting, contact Agnès Linglart (agnes.linglart@aphp.fr).

Imprinting disorders initiative
The 3rd European Imprinting School 2016 will be held near Paris, France, on 3–5 May 2016. Applications from young scientists and fellows are welcomed. Further information will be available at www.imprinting-disorders.eu.

International conference
The next International Conference on Children’s Bone Health takes place in Würzburg, Germany, on 10–13 June 2017 (www.iccbh.org).

Ola Nilsson, Co-ordinator, ola.nilsson@ki.se

References

Paediatric Endocrine Nurse Specialists Working Group

THE EUROPEAN PAEDIATRIC ENDOCRINE NURSE SPECIALISTS (PENS), in collaboration with the American and Canadian (PENS), want to develop a network committed to the advancement of the art and science of paediatric endocrine nursing.

The purpose of our Working Group is not only to share information and experience, but also to define the questions and difficulties in our job as nurses and to search for answers. It is an opportunity to establish and continue the development of good clinical practice guidelines, to provide education, and to promote collaboration between health professionals working in the field of paediatric endocrinology and related areas. The role of the paediatric endocrine nurse is very different in each country, and we have started to develop tools and documents that can be shared internationally.

We had a very informative session in Barcelona, with excellent presentations and case studies from colleagues in Canada, the Netherlands, the USA and the UK. These included:

- nurse-led short stature screening clinics
- quality management initiatives
- supporting a patient when stopping treatment
- long term outcome of males treated for precocious puberty
- clinical nurse specialist support for young people with gender dysphoria
- sharing of hypothyroid resources

We also had our first very successful ESPE international nurse focus group, which provided excellent networking opportunities for all those who attended.

Our aspirations for the group are to encourage more nurses to present their work at future international meetings and to continue sharing best practice in paediatric endocrine nursing worldwide.

Any nurses who wish to be added to our mailing list or would like to give a presentation at next year’s meeting in Paris should contact me please.

Christine Derycke, Co-ordinator, derycke.christine@skynet.be
**Disorders of Sex Development Working Group**

‘ENDOCRINE AND CULTURAL ISSUES IN DSD’ was the topic of the Working Group’s symposium for 2015. Christa Flick (Bern, Switzerland) gave us an overview of the interesting and intricate biochemical hormonal interplay between fetus and mother, entitled ‘Maternal, placental and fetal steroid hormone synthesis: the key facts for understanding DSDs’. The unique data from the psychological follow up of untreated and late-diagnosed patients with DSD in Indonesia was described by Arianne Dessens (Rotterdam, The Netherlands), who also compared the results with a similar study performed in the Netherlands.

The second part of the morning was devoted to reports from the many activities and productive work of Working Group members over the past year. As well as being important for the development of clinical care for DSD in Europe and globally, these activities promote and facilitate research activities and networking in the field in a very direct way.

Olf Hioyt (Lübeck, Germany) presented the work of the European Reference Network of the COST Action DSNet (www.dsnet.eu). Work on harmonising phenotyping in DSD and possibly entering longitudinal data into the I-DSD Registry is ongoing, and was reported by Martine Cools (Ghent, Belgium).

The I-DSD (www.i-dsd.org) and I-CAH (www.i-cah.org) Registries now comprise more than 1800 patients. The work in developing and extending the Registries continues, and was reported by Jillian Bryce, project manager of the Registry in Glasgow, UK. The Steering Committee has decided to return the Registry to the care of ESPE. It will be the responsibility of the ESPE Working Group for DSD; the Co-ordinator of the Working Group will be the Chair of the Registry Steering Committee.

The EU study dsd-LIFE (www.dsd-life.eu) is, so far, the biggest clinical outcome study performed for DSD. It includes most forms of DSD, such as XY DSD and XX DSD, Turner syndrome, klinefelter syndrome and CAH (congenital adrenal hyperplasia). Recruitment has now closed at 1225 patients. The study is conducted at 14 different sites in Europe. Its aim is to improve clinical care of individuals with DSD and to provide the basis for updating and improving European guidelines for clinical care for the different forms. Results are expected soon and will be reported accordingly.

Anna Nordenström, Co-ordinator, anna.nordenstrom@ki.se

**Paediatric and Adolescent Gynaecology Working Group**

OUR SYMPOSIUM IN BARCELONA attracted more than 600 delegates. It was chaired by Marco Cappa (Rome, Italy), Charles Sultan (Montpellier, France), Feyza Darendeliler (Istanbul, Turkey) and Anders Juul (Copenhagen, Denmark).

The first part considered ‘Short and long term challenges for the reproductive system in malignancies’. Charles A Sklar (New York, NY, USA) presented data from the Childhood Cancer Survivor Study cohort. He discussed the effects of chemotherapy and radiotherapy on ovarian function, the recommended monitoring plan (including assessment of fertility markers), and the expected age for potential complications.

Jacques Donnez (Brussels, Belgium) and Michael Grynberg (Bondy, France) summarised the established and experimental methods for fertility preservation (FP) before and after chemotherapy. The important message was that, nowadays, oncofertility counselling is a key aspect in management of cancer in the young. Sperm cryopreservation is the most effective method of FP in older adolescents; in prepubertal boys, the available procedures remain experimental. In girls, the benefits derived from the suppression of ovarian function during chemotherapy are still controversial. The most established FP technique in pubertal girls is oocyte and/or embryo cryopreservation after controlled ovarian hyperstimulation. Retrieval of immature oocytes followed by in vitro maturation and vitrification may be undertaken in emergency cases or when ovarian hyperstimulation is contraindicated, as in breast cancer. Ovarian tissue cryopreservation is the only available technique for prepubertal girls, but bears the risk of malign cell insertion.

In the second part of the symposium, Mats Brännströmm (Gothenburg, Sweden) presented thrilling and novel results on uterus transplantation, mostly in cases of Mayer–Rokitansky–Küster–Hauser syndrome. The pregnancy rate was 25% amongst child-bearing women.

Finally, Patrick Puttemans (Leuven, Belgium) discussed the diagnosis and management of endometriosis in adolescence. The most important message was that endometriosis is not an exceptional disorder in adolescence. The delay between the onset of symptoms and final diagnosis may be more than 10 years; pelvic pain that is unresponsive to oral treatment is one of the warning signs.

In 2016, the Paediatric and Adolescent Gynaecology Working Group Symposium is likely to focus on hypothalamic amenorrhoea and on breast disorders. You are cordially invited to attend! Please also suggest topics that you would like covered in forthcoming symposia.

Lourdes Ibáñez, Co-ordinator, libanez@hsjdbcn.org

**New names for ESPE Awards**

ESPE IS DELIGHTED TO BE ABLE TO SUPPORT members with a wide range of awards. Please note that two ESPE awards have recently been renamed. The ESPE Early Career Development Award is the new name for the ESPE Visiting Scholarship. This Award is generously supported by Pfizer and the next application deadline is 30 April 2016. The ESPE Mid-Career Scientific Development Award was previously known as the Sabbatical Leave Programme, and is kindly supported by Lilly. You can find out more about both awards at www.eurospe.org/awards.

**Changes to ESPE Research Fellowship**

THE ESPE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP, generously supported by Novo Nordisk, offers a grant of €125,000, which is available for up to 2 years of research training in a centre of excellence. The next deadline for applications is 1 May 2016. You can find details and how to apply at www.eurospe.org/awards/awards_researchfellowship.html.
Olaf Hiort is Professor of Paediatrics, Head of the Division of Experimental Paediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes at the University of Lübeck in Germany. In 1995, he was the third recipient of an ESPE Young Investigator Award.

AT THE TIME OF THE AWARD, Olaf was a physician in training in paediatrics, with an interest in androgen insensitivity and disorders of sex development (DSD). He had published a wide range of papers on the role of genetic mutation in the aetiology of endocrine disease, with particular interest in the androgen receptor gene and the ret proto-oncogene.

The research which earnt Olaf his Young Investigator Award was published as ‘Detection of androgen receptor gene mutations using non-isotopic single strand conformation polymorphism analysis’ (Human Molecular Genetics 1994 3 1163–1166).

Professor Hiort’s current interest in paediatric endocrinology focuses on rare conditions of sex development and calcium and bone metabolism. Since the Award, he has contributed greatly to work on DSD classification and nomenclature, having a leading role at the ESPE/LWPES (Lawson Wilkins Pediatric Endocrine Society, now the PES) DSD Consensus Conference in Chicago, IL, USA.

His participation in DSD research in general has included national and international networking activities, such as Chair of EuroDSD and the Cost Action DSDnet (www.dsdnet.eu). He was a founder member of ESPE’s DSD Working Group, and also of EuroPHP (the European Consortium for the study of Pseudohypoparathyroidism).

The many paediatric endocrinologists that he has trained include Paul-Martin Holterhus (Kiel, Germany), Wiebke Birnbaum (Lübeck, Germany), Britta Kremke (Randers, Denmark), and Julia Gesing (Leipzig, Germany).

We asked Professor Hiort to reflect upon the place of the Award in his career in paediatric endocrinology.

How has research in paediatric endocrinology evolved since your Award?

It has been an exciting time for research into rare conditions, especially due to advances in molecular genetics and molecular biology, to which we could contribute. DSD is a focus of great interest because of changes in perception and the increasing interest in health management research.

Why should a young investigator apply for the Award?

It is a wonderful step in career planning and gives the opportunity to reach out for a prestigious position in paediatric endocrinology.

How has ESPE helped your career?

In 1995 I attended the Summer School as well as the ESPE Meeting, so that was one of the most memorable ESPE Meetings of my career. At Summer School, I was with many other fellows who are now involved in ESPE: Faisal Ahmed, Vallo Tillmann, Anatoly Tiulpakov, Violeta Iotova and others. So, we all stayed in the field and have built an ongoing network of activities in paediatric endocrinology.

Olaf Hiort, Division of Experimental Paediatric Endocrinology & Diabetes, University of Lübeck, Germany
estimate that 60–80% of variation in the timing of pubertal onset is genetically determined. However, despite this strong heritability, little is known about the genetic control of human puberty. Self-limited delayed puberty (DP) segregates in an autosomal dominant pattern, but in most patients the neuroendocrine pathophysiology and its genetic regulation remain unclear.

Whole exome sequencing and follow-up targeted resequencing in families from a large, accurately phenotyped cohort with DP led to identification of four rare mutations in IGSF10 in 10 unrelated families. The functional consequences of the identified mutations were interrogated via expression of wild type and mutant proteins in mammalian cells. The identified mutations are in evolutionarily conserved positions, and two mutations result in intracellular retention with failure of secretion of the N-terminal fragment of the protein.

Tissue expression in human and mouse embryos was defined by in situ hybridisation and immunohistochemistry. IGSF10 mRNA is strongly expressed in the nasal mesenchyme in mouse and human embryos, during the period when GnRH neurones migrate from their nasal origin towards the hypothalamus. The effects of gene knockdown were investigated via in vitro neuronal migration assays, and in vivo using a transgenic zebrafish model with fluorescently labelled GnRH neurones. IGSF10 knockdown caused reduced migration of immature GnRH neurones in the in vitro analysis, and perturbed migration and extension of GnRH neurones in the zebrafish model.

The findings strongly suggest that mutations in IGSF10 cause DP in humans, through misregulation of GnRH neuronal migration during embryonic development. This is the first time that mutations in a gene affecting the migration of GnRH neurones have been shown to be involved in the pathogenesis of self-limited DP.

Read the full abstract in ESPE Abstracts 2015 84 HA1

Belgian Society for Pediatric Endocrinology and Diabetology (BESPEED)

THE BESPEED WAS ESTABLISHED as the Belgian Study Group for Pediatric Endocrinology (BSGPE) in 1989, and was renamed in 2014. It has 25 members, led by President Jean De Schepper. The Society organises a monthly meeting of its members. It also has a working group on disorders of sex development, co-ordinated by Martine Cools (martine.cools@uzgent.be).

Current Society initiatives include the preparation of patient leaflets and establishment of national accreditation, along with a training programme. Reference centres for special studies are also being set up.

You can find out more at www.bsgpe.be or via BESPEEDvzw@gmail.com. Society contacts are Jean De Schepper (jean.deschepper@uzbrussel.be), Dominique Beckers (dominique.beckers@uclouvain.be) and Sylvie Tenoutasse (sylvie.tenoutasse@huderf.be).
IT IS WITH GREAT REGRET that we report the passing of Professor Primus-Eugen Mullis, an outstanding paediatric endocrinologist whose intelligence, kindness, wit and generosity will be greatly missed by his family, colleagues and many friends throughout the world.

Primus started medical school at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, completing his studies at the University of Bern, and also spending some months in Vienna, Austria. He undertook his MD thesis under Ueli Wiesmann, a paediatrician specialising in metabolic disorders in Bern, who became his mentor and supervisor, as well as a very close friend.

Primus began his training in paediatrics at the Children’s Hospital Lucerne. In 1986, he moved to the University Children’s Hospital in Bern, headed by Ettore Rossi. There he commenced his specialist training in paediatric endocrinology and diabetology with Klaus Zuppinger. A career highlight came when Primus travelled to London to train with Charles Brook. He got his first taste of molecular biology in 1988, in David Latchman’s laboratory at University College London.

After returning to Bern to complete his training, he established a research group studying the molecular genetics of growth disorders, and was one of the first to identify mutations in PROPI in congenital hypopituitarism.

Following Professor Zuppinger’s death, it was left to Primus to build up a specialised unit for modern paediatric endocrinology and diabetology. The components of this flagship service included a high quality in- and outpatient service, a routine hormone laboratory and a molecular research laboratory for studies of growth disorders and other genetic disorders of the pituitary. He also provided undergraduate teaching within the medical school and general and specialised training in paediatrics.

He was appointed Professor and Head of the Division of Paediatric Endocrinology, Diabetology and Metabolism at the University Children’s Hospital in Bern in 2000, and ran a clinical division as well as a research group working on the molecular basis of growth hormone (GH) deficiency, with particular focus on type 2 autosomal dominant GH deficiency.

Primus was a founding member of the Department of Clinical Research (DCR), a network connecting small groups of investigators who perform laboratory research within the University Hospital for sharing equipment and expertise. He was one of the pioneers forming and leading the Graduate School of Bern (GCB) for Cellular and Biomedical Sciences. By this means, he was a dedicated mentor to numerous trainees. Overall, he supervised many MD and PhD theses and postdoctoral fellows in his research laboratory, additionally providing specialised training in paediatric endocrinology and diabetology to at least 10 fellows.

Primus published over 175 peer-reviewed publications and invited reviews, and several book chapters. He edited the Developmental Endocrinology book series and was Co-Editor of Hormone Research. Primus served on the Councils of the International Growth Hormone Research Society and the Swiss Society for Endocrinology and Diabetology, including a period as Chairman of the Swiss Society for Paediatric Endocrinology and Diabetology. He was a Board member of the Swiss National Science Foundation (2000–2009), and had been a member of the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences since 2009.

Of his many awards, Primus was proudest of the Cloetta Prize of the University of Zürich (1998) and the prestigious ESPE Research Award (2007). He was an active member of ESPE, undertaking various roles including membership of the Programme Organising Committee and of the ESPE Summer School Steering Committee, and co-ordination of the Advanced Seminars in Developmental Endocrinology.

Primus loved to watch and participate in sport. As an endocrinologist, he was therefore destined to be involved in issues of doping, and served as an expert to the Swiss Olympic Committee.

In 2007, the Sabbatical Leave Programme took Primus on a 6-month visit to Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children and the MRC National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR) in London. He pursued a research project on isolated GH deficiency type 2 with Iain Robinson at the MRC NIMR and returned to Bern refreshed and proud to have received from those institutions the title of Honorary Professor and the status of Honorary Consultant.

Away from work, Primus was a proud father to Daniel and Annina, now both adults. He was always involved in their care and dedicated time to their upbringing. More recently, he and his second wife Pia enjoyed travelling and being outdoors together. When Primus was challenged with a potentially life-threatening diagnosis in 2014, he shared this only with his family and close friends. He carried on with his beloved profession, and was determined to conquer the disease. Sadly, he passed away on 12 January, far too young, and with so much still to offer the world.

Christa E Flück, Bern, Switzerland
Mehul Dattani, London, UK
Annina Mullis, Bern, Switzerland

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Other Events

Advanced Seminar in Developmental Endocrinology
3-4 June 2016
Ulm, Germany

ESPE Summer School
6-9 September 2016
Gouvieux, France

ESPE Caucasus & Central Asia School
18-23 October 2016
Baku, Azerbaijan

ESPE Maghreb School
22-27 November 2016
Tunisia

Deadlines

Please note these fast-approaching deadline dates and submit your applications as soon as possible.

- ESPE 2016 Abstract submission: 11 Apr 2016
- ESPE 2016 Travel Grant applications: 11 Apr 2016
- ESPE Maghreb Project 2016 applications: 15 Apr 2016
- ESPE Caucasus & Central Asia School applications: 30 Apr 2016
- ESPE Early Career Development Award applications: 30 Apr 2016
- ESPE Research Fellowship applications: 1 May 2016
- ESPE Clinical Fellowship applications: 31 May 2016
- ESPE Early Career Development Award applications: 31 Jul 2016

See the ESPE website at www.eurospe.org for further details and the application process.

Future meetings

See www.eurospe.org/meetings for details of all future meetings

55th Annual ESPE Meeting
10–12 September 2016
PARIS, FRANCE

10th International Meeting of Pediatric Endocrinology
14–17 September 2017
WASHINGTON, DC, USA

57th Annual ESPE Meeting
27–29 September 2018
ATHENS, GREECE

ESPE Newsletter

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