

Meet Giuseppe Bellastella, our 2024 Jens Sandahl Christiansen Awardee in Clinical Science



Dr Giuseppe Bellastella, from Naples, Italy, is our 2024 Jens Sandahl Christiansen Awardee in Clinical Science. 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

I am currently Associate Professor of Endocrinology at the University of Campania 'Luigi Vanvitelli', Naples, Italy. My role is in the Unit of Endocrinology and Metabolic Diseases, Department of Advanced Medical and Surgical Sciences, led by Unit Director Katherine Esposito.

How were you inspired to work in endocrinology?

I have to admit that originally a certain influence was exerted by the figure of my father, a Professor of Endocrinology. However, after graduating in medicine and surgery, I was fascinated by research in endocrinology and metabolism, and I planned my first studies with my mentor, Katherine Esposito and with Dario Giugliano.

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

My lecture will concern the use of sodium–glucose cotransporter type 2 (SGLT-2) inhibitors in a condition such as post-gastrectomy reactive hyperinsulinaemic hypoglycaemia.

Postprandial hypoglycaemia is one of the main complications of gastric resection; this greatly compromises the patient's quality of life. Recent studies suggest an adaptation of intestinal absorptive function, with an upregulation of the intestinal glucose transporter SGLT-1, the primary glucose transporter in the small intestine. Canagliflozin is one of the SGLT-2 inhibitors approved for the treatment of type 2 diabetes mellitus. It is also able to

exert a modest inhibition on SGLT-1 expressed on the luminal side of the enterocytes. Accordingly, canagliflozin could reduce postprandial glucose and insulin spikes by delaying intestinal glucose absorption.

Our ongoing studies on this topic are evaluating the efficacy of canagliflozin in reducing hypoglycaemic events in patients who have already undergone gastrectomy. Preliminary results in few patients suggest that the hypoglycaemic events previously referred by the patients and clearly recorded by flash glucose monitoring completely disappeared after taking canagliflozin.

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

I think basic and clinical studies will allow clarification of aetiopathogenic aspects of some congenital and acquired, endocrine and metabolic diseases, resulting in their prevention or successful treatment.

What are the biggest challenges in your field right now?

I think there are several. For example, social challenges include the prevention of obesity in childhood and in adulthood, the prevention of diabetes mellitus, and the improvement of the treatment and quality of life of affected patients. Moreover, we must improve, perhaps with a molecular approach, the therapy of endocrine diseases with currently unfavourable prognoses.

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

I am proud of the results of my studies, of the esteem of my superiors and colleagues, of the affection of the patients, and of the love of my family and, in particular, of my children Antonio and Paolo.

What is the most enjoyable aspect of your work?

In research, I enjoy working in collaboration with colleagues with whom I can share successes and mitigate disappointment. A close group is essential for good research activity! In the clinical field, it is good to solve an intriguing case and see the gratitude in the patient's eyes.

What are you most looking forward to at ECE 2024?

I will enjoy new important contributions to scientific and clinical knowledge in endocrinology and metabolism.

Why should people join ESE?

Because it is one of the most important international scientific societies and it is an honour to be part of it.

What words of wisdom do you have for aspiring endocrinologists?

Study intensely with passion, and follow in research and clinical practice the examples and teachings of good, enlightened masters.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

ECE 2024 will be an exciting Congress!