

Meet Anna Gloyn, our 2026 Transatlantic Alliance Awardee



Professor Anna Gloyn, from Stanford, CA, USA, is our 2026 Transatlantic Alliance Awardee. She will deliver her Award Lecture in Prague at ECE 2026. Read on to learn more about her career in endocrinology, her advice for future endocrinologists, and what you can look forward to hearing her talk about at the Congress.

Please tell us about your current role

I am currently a Professor of Pediatrics (Endocrinology) and Genetics at Stanford University in the USA, where I lead a team of basic and clinical scientists in the Translational Genomics of Diabetes Lab. In addition to running my research programme, I have several leadership roles across the Department and the School of Medicine, which include serving as the Associate Chair for Basic Science Research in the Department of Pediatrics, and the Associate Director for Basic Science in the Stanford Diabetes Research Center.

How were you inspired to work in endocrinology?

As an undergraduate in the UK, I studied biochemistry. I was introduced to the wonders of insulin through my lectures on metabolism and through a fellow biochemistry student, Helen, who had been diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when she was 2 years old. I had no idea what it meant to be someone living with diabetes. I couldn't get over how much of Helen's day was taken up with just managing her blood sugar levels, and what the consequences were for her if she didn't get it right. I was curious because both her mum and older brother also had type 1 diabetes, so there had to be something in their genes.

I didn't believe it when I spotted an advert in *Nature* for a PhD project at the University of Oxford on the genetics of diabetes, with Robert Turner. This really was the 'fork in the road' for me, where I committed to a research journey in understanding the molecular genetics of diabetes. After my PhD (or, as Oxford calls them, DPhil), I was lucky that Andrew Hattersley offered me a post-doc position. So I spent four wonderful years in Exeter, UK, before returning to Oxford on a Diabetes UK RD Lawrence Career Development Fellowship, to set up my own lab.

What will you discuss in your Award Lecture at ECE 2026?

I am fascinated that people with diabetes are so different. Some are diagnosed as babies or in childhood, and others as adolescents or adults; some are overweight whilst others are lean. There are differences in how they respond to the various diabetes drugs, how their diabetes progresses and whether they develop complications.

I'm interested in the role genetics plays in this 'heterogeneity', and how we can leverage it to improve our understanding of the different causes of pancreatic β cell failure. If we understand this heterogeneity, we can utilise it to develop precision medicine approaches for all people with diabetes. We already have some great examples of precision medicine for monogenic diabetes, where a genetic diagnosis informs treatment, prognosis and risk for family members. Despite this, we continue to 'misdiagnose' and 'miss' people with these forms of diabetes.

One of the reasons is that there are large numbers of variants in these genes that we have never seen before. We don't know whether they cause diabetes or not; they are returned on diagnostic tests as variants of unknown significance (VUS). One of the ways that we and others are trying to remove diagnostic uncertainty for monogenic diabetes is by studying every possible DNA change in these genes in a single assay, so that we can understand how they affect protein function. This information can be used in conjunction with genetic and clinical information to interpret variants and deliver diagnostic certainty.

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

I love seeing my trainees succeed! Whether they are new faculty setting up their own labs, heading teams in pharma or even starting their own companies, there is nothing quite like feeling you are a small part of helping them realise their potential.

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

I think we are in very exciting times for diabetes research. There are new and emerging technologies and treatments for both type 1 and type 2 diabetes, which are changing diabetes management and progression. We are witnessing a huge shift in behaviour and cardiovascular risk with the deployment of incretin-based therapies, but not all people with diabetes are responsive to them. With an increasing number of therapeutic options, some of which are time-sensitive (e.g. immunotherapy), the need for precision diagnostics is urgent.

What are the biggest challenges in your field right now?

I think we need to ensure that the advancements in precision medicine do not exacerbate existing health disparities. There is a danger that some populations and countries could be left behind. International efforts like the Global Diabetes Heterogeneity initiative are very important to ensure that we move forward in an equitable way, and that we think carefully about the types of approach we deploy, to ensure that they can work in lots of different healthcare settings.

What is the most enjoyable aspect of your work?

I love it when one of our paediatric endocrinology fellows reaches out to me to discuss a baby or child who has an unusual diabetes presentation, and we get to work through the family history together and be gene detectives. Knowing that we can make a difference by providing diagnostic certainty and connecting them with other families with children who have the same type of diabetes is amazing.

What are you most looking forward to at ECE 2026?

The science of course – there will be leptin and incretins for sure. However, if I'm honest, I'm most excited about catching up with colleagues in 3D. I am sure there will be lots of coffee and chatting!

Why should people join ESE?

Being part of a professional organisation is a fantastic way to increase your visibility and build your network. Having a scientific home is important!

What words of wisdom do you have for aspiring endocrinologists?

Find people to work with who are kind, fun, curious and smart. Treat people how you wish to be treated. Pay forward.