

Meet Bulent Yildiz, expert on polycystic ovary syndrome



Professor Bulent Yildiz from Hacettepe University School of Medicine, Ankara, Türkiye is one of our ECE 2023 plenary speakers; he will be delivering a lecture on PCOS in Istanbul for ECE 2023. Read on to learn more about his career in endocrinology, what you can expect from him at ECE 2023, and his advice for future endocrinologists.

Tell us a little about your current position and research

I am a professor of endocrinology and metabolism at Hacettepe University School of Medicine, Ankara, Türkiye. My clinical and research interests involve obesity, type 2 diabetes, and androgen excess disorders in women including polycystic ovary syndrome. Our research particularly focuses on better understanding phenotypic features of PCOS in clinical and unselected populations as well as potential effects of oral contraceptives and other treatments on obesity, and cardiometabolic disturbances in the syndrome.

What are you presenting at ECE 2023?

I will be giving a talk entitled “PCOS – The many faces of a disease in women and men”. The phenotypic presentation of PCOS might differ between referral and unselected populations and varies within an individual over time and between individuals of different ethnic and geographic regions. I will provide an overview on definition, significance, and various comorbidities of the syndrome along with available data on cardiometabolic risk of female and male first-degree relatives of women with PCOS.

What are you looking forward to at ECE 2023?

Following a very successful congress last year in Milan, ECE 2023 in Istanbul will proceed with a comprehensive scientific programme. There are several sessions I would not miss throughout the congress but the most exciting part for me is the opportunity to get together with my friends and colleagues from Europe and beyond. ECE provides us a venue to work together for the advancement of education, patient care and advocacy in the field of endocrinology.

Who has had the most impact on your career?

I have been fortunate to work with incredible mentors, mentees, and collaborators from around the world throughout my career all of whom helped me grow both personally and professionally. I believe that peer mentorship is the key to success, and I highly value my network.

What are the biggest challenges in your field right now?

Similar to endocrinology in general, a major challenge for PCOS is the lack of awareness. Affecting one out of seven women, PCOS is a very common, lifelong disorder, yet it is not easily captured or clearly understood by the lay public, policy makers and even by medical community. Under-recognition leads to underappreciation, underfunding and lower interest for the field. Another big issue is persisting confusion over definition, diagnosis and optimal management of the disorder. Outside of infertility, adequately powered robust studies are still missing.

What do you think will be the next major breakthrough in your field?

Low level of awareness in PCOS is partly because of its misleading name. Polycystic ovaries are not necessary or sufficient for this complex disorder that affects multiple organ systems in different ways. Collaborative efforts of the international PCOS community are very close to changing the name and that would definitely be a major step for the field. Ongoing genetic and multi-omics studies have the potential to provide data for better understanding of the pathophysiology and biological mechanisms of the disorder which would then lead to a better classification and novel therapeutic options in the era of precision medicine.

Could you tell us what you most enjoy about your work?

As a physician-scientist, I most enjoy the opportunity to be involved in trans-disciplinary research. The opportunity to work with different disciplines and integrate experience and expertise in order to translate scientific data into our clinical practice is highly valuable for me.

Any words of wisdom for aspiring endocrinologists?

Reading literature, developing competence on hypothesis generation, writing scientific papers, delivering scientific presentations, serving as a reviewer, and being a good team member are all important for success in endocrine research. I suggest being proactive in

national and international research networks, investing time in scientific organisations not only for presenting data and learning about most recent research findings but also for meeting with other researchers who are future mentors and collaborators. The new era of hybrid workplace and meetings has the potential to transform both research and patient care requiring new sets of skills and provides both challenges and opportunities for the upcoming endocrinologists.