

## Meet Alessandro Prete, our 2025 Jens Sandahl Christiansen Awardee (Clinical Science)



Dr Alessandro Prete, from Birmingham, UK, is our 2025 Jens Sandahl Christiansen Awardee (Clinical Science). He will deliver his Award Lecture in Copenhagen at the Joint Congress of ESPE and ESE. 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 Clinical Associate Professor of Endocrinology at the University of Birmingham, UK, and Honorary Consultant Endocrinologist at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

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

My journey in endocrinology began in medical school, when my father was hospitalised with low potassium. Having just studied endocrinology, I suspected primary aldosteronism: a diagnosis that was later confirmed. This pivotal moment sparked my enduring passion for adrenal endocrinology, a love that carried me from Italy to the UK on my academic path.

### **What will you discuss in your Award Lecture at the 2025 Joint Congress of ESE and ESPE?**

I am honoured to receive the prestigious 2025 Jens Sandahl Christiansen Award for clinical research. My work focuses on benign adrenal tumours associated with mild autonomous cortisol secretion (MACS), a very common condition estimated to affect 1–3% of adults.

I led EURINE-ACT MACS, the largest prospective study to date on benign adrenal tumours with or without MACS. Thanks to this highly collaborative project, involving 14 endocrine centres in Europe and the USA, I was able to recruit 1305 patients with benign adrenal tumours and showed that MACS is associated with increased cardiometabolic burden and severity of hypertension and type 2 diabetes. We also carried out multi-steroid profiling in these patients, looking at a comprehensive panel of glucocorticoids and related metabolites in 24-hour urine samples. We uncovered a distinct steroid signature of MACS, characterised by increased glucocorticoid and reduced androgen excretion.

My work highlights that MACS is a common determinant of cardiometabolic health in adults, and the EURINE-ACT MACS study informed the 2023 ESE guidelines on the management of incidentally discovered adrenal tumours.

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

I am most proud of leading clinical trials that translate research into life-changing treatments for endocrine conditions. On a personal note, I owe my success to my loving family, whose unwavering support has been my foundation throughout my career.

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

Adrenal surgery is the only treatment for MACS, but this is not an option for many patients who are frail and have multiple health problems. I think that, in the next few years, patients with MACS will have access to novel adrenal- and metabolic-targeted treatments that will reduce their cardiovascular risk and improve their quality of life.

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

Securing funding for patient-focused adrenal research remains a significant challenge. Furthermore, diminishing support for early career clinicians who are interested in research threatens the future of academic endocrinology, compounded by global pressures on healthcare systems.

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

I love the variety of challenges that my work offers – one day is never the same as the next! Switching between the different ‘hats’ of research and clinical activity is always exciting and empowering.

**What are you most looking forward to at the 2025 Joint Congress?**

The 2025 Joint Congress unites ESPE and ESE for the first time. I am excited by its innovative focus on endocrine and metabolic health across the life course, and the opportunity to learn from diverse perspectives.

**Why should people join ESE?**

ESE is a melting pot of the brightest minds in endocrinology and metabolism. It offers excellent resources for clinicians, researchers and patients alike, bringing together different countries and cultures.

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

Endocrinology thrives on the beauty of complexity, requiring a deep understanding of interconnected systems and a commitment to lifelong learning to keep pace with advancements in the field. Approach every patient with compassion, embracing collaboration and innovation to deliver precise, impactful care.

**Is there anything else you would like to add?**

See you all in Copenhagen!