



## Jan-Christoph Simon

Professor and Chairman, Department of Dermatology, Venereology and Allergology, and Medical-Scientific Head, Department of Internal Medicine, Neurology and Dermatology, University Hospital Leipzig, Germany; Board Member for the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV)

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### Q1 Following your medical training, what inspired you to pursue a career in dermatology?

I was attracted to dermatology while at medical school. I did part of my medical training at Glasgow University, UK, and there a very inspiring dermatologist, Rona McKie, really got me interested. Back in Germany, I did a very extensive MD thesis on the immunology of melanoma in the laboratories of the Max Planck Institute of Immunology, Freiburg. Finally, two mentors really got me hooked: the Chair of the Department of Dermatology in Freiburg, Germany, Erwin Schöpf, and Paul Bergstresser, Chair of Dermatology in Dallas, Texas, USA, where I did my postdoctoral fellowship in immunodermatology.

### Q2 With over 340 publications to your name, which areas of dermatology research do you think warrant greater attention?

What warrants greater attention is the effect of nutrition on both skin health and skin disease.

### Q3 You recently co-authored a review entitled 'Developments and perspectives in allergology'. Which key messages were you trying to convey?

First of all, I conveyed the message that dermatology has an important impact on allergology. Then of course, the most recent

advances in allergology: molecular diagnosis that helps us to characterise the allergic response and give a risk assessment of an individual patient in much more detail, which is true personalised medicine. And then, of course, we are in the area of biologicals, where we can intervene very specifically in inflammatory circuits in allergy by using specific monoclonal antibodies or small molecules.

### Q4 What are the main responsibilities associated with your role as a board member for the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV)?

I joined the EADV very early, because I really liked the idea of a European spirit in dermatology. This also reflects my personal life; part of my high school time was spent in England, and part of my medical school study in Scotland. Now, I serve as an EADV board member. Together with my colleague, Klaus Strömer, we are ambassadors for Germany. In addition, I have also been newly elected to the Honours and Awards Committee, which is highly rewarding, because we give stipends and scholarships to young dermatologists from all over the world. In sum, I really liked the EADV. It is a very nice family of highly professional dermatologists from all over Europe and if they want me to, I am prepared to take even more responsibilities.

**Q5** What are the main focuses of EADV23, and how do they differ from last year's congress?

Being German, I am of course proud that that we are hosting this year's meeting in our capital Berlin, and I invite all of our colleagues and friends from all over Europe, and the world, to come and join us there. The international Scientific Committee headed by Michel Gillet from Switzerland has put together a spectacular programme. Never before have there been so many therapeutic advances coming into dermatology and we are proud to give an overview of these innovations in Berlin, and also to put everything in a global context. The other thing which we have learned from the past 3 years of the COVID-19 pandemic is the challenges of infections, and dermatology is well prepared to meet that challenge.

**Q6** You are due to present a session entitled 'Nutrition and dermatology' at EADV23. What will be the key takeaways?

I am going to give an overview of what is known about the nutritional effect on skin health and disease. In addition, I will present our most recent research: we have studied how certain components of our nutrition affect skin inflammation in psoriasis and how simple dietary measures can really help as an adjunct treatment to existing medical treatments of psoriasis.

**Q7** What has been your proudest achievement since being appointed as Medical Scientific Director of the Department of Internal Medicine, Neurology and Dermatology at the University Hospital Leipzig?

I have been elected and re-elected to do this for the past 12 years; it is something that comes on top of my job as Professor and Chair of the Department of Dermatology in Leipzig, which is one of the larger departments in Germany. Looking back at the last 3 years, I am proud of how we managed COVID-19 here in Leipzig. In addition, in the last 12 years the respect and acceptance of dermatology as an important player in the concert of the other medical specialties grew steadily to a very high degree.

**Q8** Which sessions should not be missed at EADV23?

First of all, I would encourage everyone reading this interview to look at EADV23's vast programme, which covers all facets of modern dermatology and venereology; there will be something for every taste and interest. We also have a focus on dermatological aesthetics on Saturday and Sunday. Personally I never miss the plenaries, the controversies, or the hot topics, selected by the EADV President, Martin Röcken. Moreover, the EADV is a family, so I never miss the opening of the congress, and the social gathering. In Berlin the German Academy of Dermatology will present itself and invite our guests to a special evening, and we would, of course, be happy if you would pop by.

In sum, the EADV is going to try its very best to make this 2023 meeting a memorable experience for all of our guests from around the world. ●

