



Congress Interviews

EMJ is delighted to introduce Thrasivoulos Tzellos, Shyam Verma, Robert Hunger, Margarida Gonçalo, and Jan-Christoph Simon, thought leaders in dermatology who delve into their illustrious careers and ground-breaking research, providing insight into their work with the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV).



Thrasivoulos Tzellos

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Q1 What led to you pursue a career in dermatology research following your medical degree?

I was always interested in research. Right after my medical degree in 2004 I went to a MSc course regarding research and I was lucky enough to come in contact with well-known dermatologists in the research field through the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV), like Christos Zouboulis, who were eager to guide me. Soon I understood that dermatological research is a fascinating field with a lot of development and real opportunities to produce evidence that can help patients. The role of the EADV is crucial in facilitating young scientists/dermatologists to come in contact with research networks. Thankfully, the EADV has already organised important and critical structures to achieve this. EADV Task Forces is the best way to join research networks with regular meetings during EADV congresses, and the EADV School organises courses for research techniques. Furthermore, EADV Scholarships can really

boost young scientists' careers with a research interest. My personal experience is that my career was hugely facilitated by participating in EADV.

Q2 Your main research interests are hidradenitis suppurativa (HS), skin aging, skin carcinogenesis, and atopic dermatitis. What are the most exciting recent advances within these fields?

I feel that for all these fields the exciting advances are the extensive pipeline and the new drugs that will facilitate better treatment and personalised medicine. The more treatments we have for such diseases, the better for our patients. The introduction and development of immunotherapy for atopic dermatitis, HS, and skin cancer was a critical point that really positively changed and will continue to improve the quality of life of patients and most importantly increase survival. The interest of drug companies for these diseases and the large pipeline is only good news for

our patients. New drugs coming means more options and the achievement of personalised medicine. We hope that the future for these diseases will be like psoriasis. It is difficult nowadays to find patients with psoriasis who will not respond to any of the available treatments.

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Q3 How does your involvement as a serving member on the board of the European Hidradenitis Suppurativa Foundation (EHSF) contribute to increased awareness of the condition?

HS is indeed a chronic inflammatory skin disease that still has a diagnosis delay of more than 7 years and increasing awareness is critical. I feel that all members of EHSF are well aware of the fact that this is a critical problem and we try to increase awareness by bringing patient organisations to the front, promoting the evidence, and organising sessions and courses both in the EHSF and the EADV. EADV's help and role is crucial in this. The EADV Task Force for HS brings together experts from the entire world in an effort to maximise potential and awareness, and the EADV School regularly organises HS courses, both for residents and specialists, in an effort to bring knowledge and awareness. HS patient groups always have a place in EADV congresses, and at each EADV congress the EHSF organises a subspecialty meeting.

Q4 How much of an impact do you believe the EADV congress has, both directly on dermatologists and indirectly on patients?

I know from personal experience that the EADV congress and the EADV in general can have a huge positive impact, both for the development and evolution of dermatologists and for patients. The EADV congress is the arena where dermatologists can hear the latest developments, participate in EADV Task Forces, come in contact with patient organisations, and

participate in a big network of scientists from all over the world. The EADV, being one of the leading societies of dermatology worldwide, has a crucial role to play in increasing awareness; building bridges between European Union (EU) regulators, dermatological organisations, patient organisations, and all other important stakeholders; and promoting practical recommendations and new evidence. For all these reasons, the EADV has the unique role and responsibility to continue working on this path towards improving patients' lives.

Q5 What changes have you brought into effect whilst serving as Representative of the Board on the EADV executive committee?

I started my role as Representative of the Board on the EADV Executive Committee just a few months ago, in January 2023. My goal is to further facilitate good communication between these two groups. I also have a personal interest and expertise to facilitate the development of EADV evidence-based, practical recommendations for many skin diseases, which is very important both for dermatologists and patients. Finding the best evidence, and evaluating and transforming this into easy to understand recommendations for patients, can have a significant positive impact in promoting awareness and facilitating correct diagnosis, treatment, and follow up. There are many questions that are waiting for an evidence-based reply, and the role of the EADV in this is very important. I feel that I can contribute to this effort.

Q6 What are the main focusses of EADV23 and how do they differ from last year's congress?

I think that EADV23 will not differ much from EADV22 when it comes to sessions and focuses. The EADV Scientific Committee always organises sessions that cover all important aspects, from chronic inflammatory skin diseases and skin cancer to quality of life. The main focus is always clinically relevant sessions that can facilitate better treatment for patients.

Q7 Which sessions are you most looking forward to at EADV23 and why?

I have to say atopic dermatitis and HS. Both are diseases with high unmet needs for our patients and the pipeline and developments are exciting. EADV congress is the arena used by all scientists involved to present new evidence and breakthrough results. For HS, I am looking forward to hear the new evidence for emerging treatments, the Phase 2 and 3 clinical trials results, and the important developments for new improved clinical outcomes such as IHS4-55, as well as quality of life outcomes.

Q8 Are there any innovations on the horizon for the field of dermatology that you think are particularly noteworthy?

I feel that with all these new drugs and the extensive pipeline, personalised medicine will become important in the future. The mRNA-based vaccines for COVID-19 helped researchers find a way to use experimental immunotherapy, so it seems the door is now unlocked. Another innovation will be the use of genes, viruses, and cells for skin treatment. The COVID-19 era also facilitated the quick development of telemedicine in dermatology and I think that this will be an important part of the future. Lastly, artificial skin and 3D printing, along with tissue regeneration, are fields that have a lot to offer in the future of dermatology. ●

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