



Congress Interview

EMJ had the pleasure of speaking to the President of the European Association for Haemophilia and Allied Disorders (EAHAD), Wolfgang Miesbach. Read on to discover his highlights from the EAHAD 2024 congress, and the discussion of pertinent topics, such as gene therapy, haemophilia B, and patient-centred research.

Featuring: Wolfgang Miesbach



Wolfgang Miesbach

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Q1 Could you share the story behind what initially sparked your interest in medicine and, specifically, what experiences or influences led you to specialise in blood coagulation, with a focus on conditions like haemophilia?

I have always been fascinated by the human body's complexity and resilience. During medical school, I was drawn to the intricate balance of blood coagulation. The challenge of managing conditions like haemophilia, where even a small imbalance can have significant consequences, motivated me to specialise in this field.

"My primary aim is to enhance international collaboration in haemophilia research."

Q2 Reflecting on your career, what are the most significant changes or advancements you have observed in the treatment of haemophilia? How have these developments transformed patient care and treatment outcomes?

Over my career, the advancements for haemophilia treatment have been revolutionary. Initially, treatment focused primarily on managing bleeding episodes. Now, we are moving towards more permanent solutions like gene therapy, offering the potential for long-term control, or even a cure. This shift has transformed patient care, significantly improving their quality of life, and reducing long-term complications.



Q3 What are some of the exciting changes, or new features, which you have implemented for the upcoming European Association for Haemophilia and Allied Disorders (EAHAD) 2024 meeting? How do these changes reflect the evolving needs and trends in haemophilia research and treatment?

The EAHAD 2024 meeting will maintain its traditional structure, while introducing some new elements in its 4-day programme. The event begins with the Allied Health Professionals Day, and concludes with the presentation of late-breaking abstracts. Highlights include a session on the impact of artificial intelligence in research, patient care, and scientific communication. A significant focus will be on non-factor therapies, and optimising the outcome of haemophilia treatment. The conference will also feature new elements, such as pro and con debates on current, controversial topics in haemophilia, allowing for active participation from attendees. Additionally, there will be presentations of interdisciplinary work by EAHAD working groups, and reports from the Research Grant winners.

The EAHAD Lifetime Achievement Awards 2024 will be presented, with special presentations by Ulla Hedner on the development of rFVIIa, a haemostatic agent; and reflections by Kate Khair on a lifetime of haemophilia nursing. The 2024 Arosenius Lecture will be given by Karin Fijnvandraat on insights into non-severe

haemophilia. The event will also include poster awards; the 2023 research grants awards; and a panel discussion on the challenges of access, reimbursement, and the feasibility of new treatments, with a focus on practicability, functionality, and sustainability.

Q4 During your tenure as EAHAD Congress President, what specific goals or objectives are you hoping to achieve? How do these align with the broader vision and mission of the association?

As the Congress President of EAHAD 2024, my primary aim is to enhance international collaboration in haemophilia research, with a specific focus on integrating new technologies. This involves swiftly translating emerging research into clinical practice, directly benefiting patients. This approach aligns with EAHAD's mission to elevate care standards for those with haemophilia and related disorders. We are prioritising interdisciplinary collaboration and patient-centric strategies, introducing sessions that blend research, clinical practice, and patient advocacy. These initiatives address the evolving needs in haemophilia care, and are geared towards promoting patient-focused research and treatment strategies, ensuring that advancements in technology and medicine directly improve patient outcomes.

Q5 How does the work and initiatives of EAHAD directly impact clinicians in their practice? Furthermore, how do these effects indirectly benefit patients living with haemophilia and related disorders?

EAHAD plays a crucial role in shaping clinical practices by providing cutting-edge research, guidelines, and training opportunities. This directly enhances clinicians' ability to offer the latest treatments and care strategies. Indirectly, these improvements in practice greatly benefit patients, leading to better management of their conditions, and an overall enhancement in quality of life.

"We are on the brink of several exciting innovations in coagulation disorders."

Q6 What unique approaches or practices have been adopted at Frankfurt University Hospital in the field of haematology that could serve as valuable learning points for other university hospitals?

Frankfurt University Hospital has pioneered a comprehensive care model in the care of patients with blood coagulation disorders, emphasising multidisciplinary collaboration and patient-centred research. With this approach to integrating research directly into clinical care, patient benefit can be ensured from the latest scientific advancements in real-time.

Q7 Are there any groundbreaking innovations in the field of coagulation disorders that are on the cusp of being translated into clinical practice? What impact do you anticipate these innovations will have on patient care and disease management?

We are on the brink of several exciting innovations in coagulation disorders. These include advanced cell and gene therapies, and novel anticoagulants that promise greater efficacy, and fewer side effects. I anticipate these developments will greatly enhance patient care, offering more personalised and effective disease management strategies.

Q8 Following your recent publication, entitled 'The current challenges faced by people with haemophilia B', can we expect your research and professional focus to predominantly lie in this area of rare hereditary diseases in the near future? What drives your interest in this specific field?

One of my recent publications reflects a growing interest in the unique challenges of haemophilia B, and similar rare hereditary diseases. I plan to continue focusing on these areas, driven by the need for better understanding, and improved treatments. These conditions, often overshadowed by more common disorders, deserve more attention and research, to provide better care for those affected. ●

