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ESPGHAN Distinguished Service Award 2015 to Professor C. Olle E. Hernell

Berthold Koletzko, Ludwig-Maximilians-University of Munich, Dr. von Hauner Children's Hospital, München, Germany

Correspondence:

Berthold Koletzko, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Dr. von Hauner Children's Hospital, Lindwurmstr. 4, D-80337 München, Germany. Phone: +49 89 44005 2826, Fax: +49 89 44005 7742, Email: office.koletzko@med.lmu.de

The European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (ESPGHAN) presents its Distinguished Service Award - the society's highest award - to an individual who has made a major contribution to the development of paediatric gastroenterology, hepatology or nutrition.

The criteria for selection include:

1. Outstanding scientific achievements related to paediatric gastroenterology and/or hepatology, and/or nutrition, usually documented by the candidate's publication and citation record
2. Outstanding contributions to the standards, practice and training in the fields of paediatric gastroenterology and/or hepatology and/or nutrition
3. Outstanding contributions to ESPGHAN as a society
4. Personal integrity

The Selection Committee unanimously agreed to present the 2015 award to Professor Olle Hernell, MD PhD, Section of Paediatrics, Department of Clinical Sciences, Umeå University, Sweden (Figure 1), who scored highest ratings in all four categories.

Olle started his academic career at the Department of Physiological Chemistry, Umeå University, Sweden, where he worked first as research assistant, and then as lecturer and Docent (assistant professor) in Physiological Chemistry. His work focussed on lipid digestion and lipase activity in human milk, where he soon became a world leader. In 1977 he joined the Department of Paediatrics, where he became a lecturer and consultant in 1982. From 1984 to 1985 he was a Research Fellow in Medicine at the Division of Gastroenterology, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston. After his return to Umea, he became Professor and senior consultant in 1986. From 1991 to 2010, Olle served as Chair of the Department of Paediatrics at Umeå University and was able to build and consolidate substantial growth of its scientific strength, particularly in the areas of paediatric gastroenterology and nutrition. A particular strength was his ability to encourage and support several younger colleagues in establishing their own successful research programme, which has made Umeå a very strong academic centre of paediatric research. This is reflected by a record number of four Jean Rey Awards awarded to colleagues in Umea over the years for the best nutrition presentations at ESPGHAN congresses. In 2012, Olle was appointed as senior professor and senior consultant at the same department. Between 1996 and 2014, he has stayed many times as Visiting professor at the Department of Nutrition, University of California, Davis, CA, USA and built a strong and lasting scientific collaboration with Professor Bo Lönnerdal and colleagues. Olle is a very productive researcher and prolific writer. The Web of Science lists 384 publications, 8348 cited times, and a Hirsch-index of 49, with a focus on lipid metabolism and digestion, paediatric nutrition, and coeliac disease. Olle's broad knowledge and balanced discernment have been widely acknowledged, and he was asked to serve on many expert and advisory groups, including i. a. the Executive Committee of the International Society for Research on Human Milk and Lactation (1991 - 1995), the Swedish National Committee of Nutritional Sciences of the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences

(1987 – 2006), where he served as Secretary from 1990 – 1992, and the Swedish Expert Committee on Paediatric Nutrition (1993 - 2013) which he chaired from 1997 to 2013.

Olle has been a loyal and active member of ESPGHAN since 1982 and actively contributed to its annual congresses year after year. From 1987 to 2000, he was member of the society's ESPGAN Committee on Nutrition, and he served as Council member from 1994 to 1997. He has been a member of the Editorial board of the Journal of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition from 1995 to 2001 and serves as Associate editor since 2010. Olle has contributed greatly to building and strengthening our field and ESPGHAN. He stands out not only because he is so very tall, but he is treasured because he is extremely bright, creative, and productive, and very friendly and supportive to peers and colleagues. He enjoys a large international network of close friends and is highly appreciated because he stands for quality, honesty and integrity. He is a keen badminton player, loves to travel and is very much a family person. He likes to gather his extended family in the summer house outside of Umeå during holidays and the summer, and he very much enjoys his grandchildren that he is rather proud of. We cannot think of Olle without his wonderful wife Tina who has been part of his life for many decades and who has become part of the ESPGHAN network of friends.

On behalf of ESPGHAN, I congratulate Olle and thank him for his enormous contribution to our field, and for his great contributions to promoting child health. ESPGHAN is proud to have Olle as a member and a friend.

Acknowledgements:

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Figure 1: Professor C. Olle E. Hernell at the 2015 Annual General Meeting of ESPGHAN at Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

