

Donald E. Nease, Jr., Heide Otten, Günther Bergmann (Eds.)  
The Student, the Patient and the Illness

Forum Psychosozial

Donald E. Nease, Jr., Heide Otten,  
Günther Bergmann (Eds.)

# **The Student, the Patient and the Illness**

**Ascona Balint Award Essays 2024**

With contributions by Sophia Babnigg, Vivian Lu,  
Mateus Menezes dos Santos, Laura Mota Vieira Lima,  
Julian Neugebauer, Dorothee Otte, Dikshya Parajuli,  
Tuyen Pham, Morgan W. See, Sarah Tavares Araújo Santos,  
Taneka Tezak, Megan Torpey and Ramila Tostes

Awarded by the International Foundation  
Psychosomatic and Social Medicine

With a foreword by Tove Mathiesen  
President of the International Balint Federation (IBF)

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# Foreword

Welcome to all new readers of the Ascona students essay book series. Students, teachers, young and old, unexperienced beginners and experienced Balint group leaders.

I want to recommend you this book that will take you to the frontiers of young doctors' experiences in relation to their patients, and their reflections on the many complicated dilemmas they face during their early clinical experience.

We all remember this position, and we also recognise the dilemmas clinical and ethical, that are described, and that we must face during our whole professional life.

This is the reason why the Ascona students essay book is awaited with joy and excitement between experienced clinicians, and the reason why IBF is honoured to join the Ascona foundation in the publication of this booklet's series. The membership in a Balint groups as a basic prerequisite for the work as a doctor and for the maintenance of the doctor himself is a long term and appreciated working tool.

I hope that you will enjoy this book, share it with all your young students and your colleagues in the institutes and all over the world where clinical work takes place.

Congratulations to the three winners of the Ascona award 2024. I'm looking forward to meeting all of you at the IBF-conference in Boulder/Colorado September this year.

*Tove Mathiesen*  
*President of the International Balint Federation*





# Introduction

Once again, it is a particular pleasure to be able to present the results of the “Ascona” international student essay competition through this book. There were 36 essays submitted by students from 11 countries, each detailing moving experiences from their relationships with patients.

The awards and presentations by the prize winners will be held at the Congress of the International Balint Federation in September 2024 in Boulder, Colorado USA.

The winners of the Award are (in alphabetical order):

Mateus Menezes dos Santos from Brazil

Julian Neugebauer from Germany

Dikshya Parajuli from Nepal (studying in New Zealand)

As was done with the 2022 Awards, these essays were equally deserving and the jury decided to distribute the prize money of 5,000 CHF equally.

The three winners are invited to the 23<sup>rd</sup> International Balint Congress in Boulder, Colorado. They will present their papers there, take part in the Congress and the Balint group work.

You will find the three essays in Part I of this book.

In Part II we present 10 more essays written by students from different countries, which had high rankings.

An international group of reviewers consisting of experienced Balint Group Leaders from different National Balint Societies performed the initial evaluation and rating of the student papers, by using a scale of defined criteria according to the announcement of the Award. Subsequently, a jury with representation from

the International Balint Federation and the Foundation for Psychosomatic and Social Medicine selected the award winners.

Thanks to all who participated in the reviews and award selections. This was a valuable and competent work reading and rating the student essays, a model for our international partnership.

The Ascona Prize is awarded as a partnership between the International Foundation Psychosomatic and Social Medicine, based in Switzerland, and the International Balint Federation (IBF).

It is an important goal of both institutions to focus and improve the student/doctor-patient-relationship. To start early in the training with taking the “Doctor as a Drug” into account is important. As we can see and feel through the essays in early years it is a heartfelt need to understand more about the patients and oneself. This is the case worldwide.

The Foundation and the IBF are pleased to have brought this work together again to an impressive result – the number of works received, the commitment of the students, the impressive encounters and relationships that are presented are evidence of the worthwhile outcomes of the effort to design and offer this prize again and again.

This volume also serves to set a stimulus among the students in and through the National Balint Societies. We are happy to offer them to all Universities. Besides the announcement in the media for the next call for applications for the year 2026 there will be a link or form to order copies of this book on our websites [www.foundation-ps.com](http://www.foundation-ps.com) and [www.balintinternational.com](http://www.balintinternational.com)

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