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Foreword

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the Patient
and the Illness

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Welcome – (again) to all readers of the Ascona students essay book series.

Congratulations to the Ascona Prize winners of 2026, to the Ascona Foundation and to all clinicians working with the relation to their patients and their illness.

Again 2026 has shown a rich harvest of contributions for the Ascona Prize, many were in close competition for the prizes, and I recommend to you to study all these essays in more details. They provide a rich material to be worked on further in the individual authors professional work and in their personal lives as it will be interwoven in their coming practice.

The essays also offer the more experienced Balint Group Leaders new thoughts and a fresh view at well-known experiences. They could be the basis of many discussion groups among professors at the medical faculties around the world.

It's a special honour to me to welcome the winners at the 24th International Balint Conference in Aarhus 'Connected, Committed and Contained' coming in October. I'm sure the presentation of these papers will influence the feeling during the whole conference and that we will share many interesting discussions in the plenary and in the Balint groups.

Tove Mathiesen
President of the International Balint Federation