

In Memoriam Beat Hadorn

No being can fall into nothingness! The eternal stirs and continues in all things.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

With great sadness, we commemorate our colleague and close friend Beat Hadorn, who passed away in October 2025 at the age of 91.



He was born on May 13, 1933, in Oberdiessbach near Bern. He studied medicine in Zurich and subsequently worked at the Biochemical Institute as an assistant to Franz Leuthardt. He received his training in pediatrics under Andrea Prader at the Children's Hospital in Zurich. At the same time, he pursued vocal studies in Zurich with Heinz Rehfuß and later with Brigitte Kuhn-Indermühle.

A scholarship from the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences took him in 1966/67 to the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne under Charlotte Anderson. There, as part of his PhD research on the activation of trypsinogen by enterokinase, he was the first to discover the genetic deficiency of enterokinase.

During this time, he also identified the insufficient bicarbonate secretion by the exocrine pancreas in patients with cystic fibrosis.

After completing his habilitation in pediatrics, he was appointed Head of the Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology in 1971, a position he held until 1978. He then became Director of the University Children's Hospital in Graz, and in 1983, Director of the University Children's Hospital at the Dr. von Hauner Children's Hospital in Munich, which he led until 1998.

During this period, in collaboration with Andreas Holzinger, he succeeded in identifying the mutations responsible for enterokinase deficiency in affected children.

Beat Hadorn was one of the founding members of ESPGHAN in 1968 in Paris and, together with his friend Bertil Lindquist, the society's first president, was also involved in establishing the Committee on Nutrition, on which he served for many years.

Beat Hadorn was not only an outstanding pediatric gastroenterologist and scientist but also a gifted singer and painter, who often shared these talents to the delight of all ESPGHAN members. Unforgettable is his performance in Graz at the ESPGHAN Annual Meeting in May 1983, where he captivated us with his singing at the social evening on his 50th birthday. His friend Bertil Lindquist accompanied him on the piano. His short speech before the performance has become legendary: "I never thought I would celebrate my 50th birthday with so many friends."

At the joint ESPGHAN-NASPGHAN meeting in Amsterdam in 1990, Beat Hadorn also performed together with the pediatrician Nel Biervliet, singing opera arias at the social evening. His entertaining performances with John Harris, who also had a fine voice, at ESPGHAN annual meetings remain fondly remembered.

Beat cared deeply about our society and inspired us all through his brilliant scientific and artistic gifts. We will always remember him as a warm-hearted colleague and mourn his loss. Our thoughts are with his family. ESPGHAN will cherish his memory with honor.

Michael J. Lentze

Department of Pediatrics, School of Medicine & University Hospital Bonn,
University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany