ROLF LUFT AWARD

Rolf Luft Award is a world known prestigious award in diabetology and endocrinology given since 2000 for outstanding breakthrough research. The award consists of a medal, a diploma and prize money (10 000 Euro).

Rolf Luft is Father of Endocrinology in Sweden and the Father of Mitochondrial Medicine. He was born in 1914 in Stockholm, Sweden. In 1944, he obtained his PhD from Karolinska Institutet for his thesis entitled: “A study on Hirsutism, Cushing´s Syndrome and Precocious Puberty”.

A grant from the Knut & Alice Wallenberg Foundation in 1946 gave him the opportunity to visit Massachusetts General Hospital, USA, for one year, to work with Fuller Albright. As a professor and head of the Department of Endocrinology at Karolinska Hospital (1958-1979), he supervised a legion of scholars in diabetes.

In 1958, Rolf Luft discovered a disturbed function of mitochondria as a cause of disease, referred to as ’Luft disease’. This discovery led to the development of Mitochondrial Medicine. In 1988, mutations in the mitochondria were associated with diabetes mellitus, which eventually led to the discovery of mitochondrial diabetes. Mitochondrial dysfunction is today known to be associated with type 2 diabetes.

Rolf Luft received innumerable awards, several honorary doctorates, and was made an honorary member of many diabetic associations and scientific academies in different countries. He served as President of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) for six years and was a founding member of The European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD). He was also a member of the Nobel Assembly at Karolinska Institute, between 1961 and 1980, and served as chairman of the Nobel Committee for Physiology or Medicine 1976 - 1978. Rolf Luft published the first national program for diabetes care 1976. He died in 2007.

PROGRAM

Rolf Luft Award 2026

Prize Ceremony & Lectures

September 10th, 2026

Time: 13:00 - 14:20

At Nobel Forum, Nobelsväg 1
Karolinska Institutet, Solna

Karolinska Institutet

Rolf Luft’s
STIFTELSE FÖR DIABETESFORSKNING

Rolf Luft Award ~ Rolf Luft Foundation for Diabetes Research
luftdiabetesfoundation.se ~ info@luftdiabetesfoundation.se

PROGRAM

13:00 **Introduction**
Kerstin Brismar, Chair of the Rolf Luft Foundation and Senior Professor, Karolinska Institutet

13:05 **Rolf Luft Award Prize Ceremony**
Petter Höglund, Professor, Dean for Research, Karolinska Institutet

Recipients of the Rolf Luft Award 2026
Richard Dennis Di Marchi, Indiana University, USA and **Matthias Tschöp**, Ludvig Maximillian University, Munich, Germany

13:10 **The Prize Lectures**
Professor Richard Dennis Di Marchi: ”Learn, Unlearn, Relearn - Chemistry Enabling Biology”

Professor Matthias Tschöp: ”The anti-obesity actions of glucagon and GIP: From discovering biology to inventing polyagonism”

14:15 Short interval

14:20-17:30 **Rolf Luft Symposium (Novo Nordisk)**
Chair **Daniel Andersson**, Associate Professor, Karolinska Institutet.

See separate program.

Left: Professor Richard Dennis Di Marchi. Right: Professor Matthias Tschöp

RECIPIENTS OF ROLF LUFT AWARD 2026

Richard Dennis Di Marchi, Indiana University, Bloomington, USA and Matthias Tschöp, Ludvig Maximillian University, Munich, Germany are awarded the Rolf Luft Award 2026 for outstanding, groundbreaking scientific contribution in diabetes and obesity with basic research leading to important clinical implications with the **Short motivation**: ”for advances in peptide chemistry and the development of novel dual and triple agonists for the treatment of diabetes and obesity.”

Extended motivation

Professors Richard DiMarchi and Matthias Tschöp discovered a new class of drugs with unprecedented efficacy in treating diabetes and obesity. Several versions of these so-called gut hormone poly-agonists have advanced through clinical trials. One class representative, with the same active peptide ingredient named tirzepatide advanced by Eli Lilly, has already been FDA approved for treating type 2 diabetes in 2022 as “Mounjaro” and obesity in 2023 as “Zepbound.” Treatment of obese patients with tirzepatide decreased patients’ body weight more than 20%, an excess weight where obesity is typically defined. This level of weight lowering had previously only been possible with gastric bypass surgery. The discovery and validation of these highly efficient drugs for obesity, by DiMarchi & Tschöp have accomplished a transformative breakthrough, which provides a path for reversing the obesity pandemic. Additionally, it has set a direction in drug discovery for complex diseases when there is no effective therapy and more than one integrated mechanism in action might prove equally effective as demonstrated in obesity.

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