

## The President's Lecture

In October 2004, the International Council created a new distinguished lecture, named The President's Lecture, which is a highlight of ISHR World Congresses and Section meetings.

The President's Lecture is held at each World Congress of the ISHR and, in non-Congress years, at the annual meeting of one of the ISHR Sections on a rotating basis. This lecture is intended to be a high profile event and is scheduled as a keynote plenary lecture. **The topic of the lecture is in the field of molecular biology, genetics, genomics or proteomics, but the content should be chosen to be of broad interest to the cardiovascular community.** The speaker is reimbursed for travel expenses, and receives a plaque and a \$1,000 honorarium. A photograph and biosketch of the speaker is published in *Heart News and Views*, and is posted in the ISHR website.

The President's Lecture enhances the content of the ISHR scientific meetings by providing a high-quality presentation in a topical area that is not covered by other distinguished lecture awards, and reflects the continuing growth of the ISHR as a professional Society. This award was initiated in 2006 by Roberto Bolli, MD, who generously donated his Research Achievement Award monetary prize for this purpose. President's Lecture Award winners are nominated and elected by members of the ISHR-International Council.



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for Heart Research

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International Society  
for Heart Research

## The President's Lecture 2025



Honored Speaker

**Pilar Alcaide, Ph.D.**

**“T cell inflammation  
at the heart of cardiac  
remodeling ”**

## Pilar Alcaide, PhD

2025 Honored Speaker  
Nara, Japan

Dr. Alcaide is the Kenneth and JoAnn G. Wellner Professor of Immunology, the Director of the Immunology Graduate program and the Assistant Dean for Faculty Development at Tufts University School of Medicine, Boston, MA. She received her PhD, cum laude, in Molecular Biology and Immunology from Universidad Autonoma of Madrid, Spain. As a recipient of a Fulbright postdoctoral fellowship, Dr. Alcaide trained in vascular biology at the Department of Pathology, Brigham and Women's hospital, Boston, MA. Dr. Alcaide was appointed Instructor of Pathology at Harvard Medical School, where she successfully competed for a "Pathway to Independence NIH K99/R00" award and launched her independent laboratory.

Dr. Alcaide's research focuses in understanding the role of T lymphocytes in heart inflammation and their impact in the progression of heart failure, with the goal of unveiling new pathways that can potentially be targeted in therapeutic useful ways. Dr. Alcaide's impact extends beyond her work as a leader in the growing field of cardio-immunology into the global scientific arena. She has been an invited speaker at numerous national and international conferences and, coupled with her participation in seminars across renowned institu-

tions, has captivated audiences on a global scale, and contributed to the dissemination of discoveries positioning immune responses as central modulators of adverse cardiac remodeling in heart failure. Her work has been published in prestigious journals that include *Circulation*, the *Journal of Experimental Medicine*, *The Journal of Clinical Investigation* and *Nature Cardiovascular Research*, and has resulted in continuously funded grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and private foundations that include the American Heart Association (AHA). Dr. Alcaide has received several awards, including the American Society of Investigative Pathology (ASIP) 2018 Cotran Early Career Investigator, awarded to early career investigators with demonstrated excellence in Pathology, the 2021 ISHR NAS Mid Career Research and Scholarship Award, the 2024 FASEB Outstanding Mid Career Investigator Award, and the recently awarded 2025 ASIP Outstanding Investigator Award. She was named Fellow of the AHA and the ISHR and is now the Vice President of ASIP and will become president of the Society in 2025.

Dr. Alcaide put forth the idea that T lymphocytes contributed to the pathological structural changes of the failing heart in heart failure (HF) in the absence of any infectious, autoimmune or ischemic injury trigger that would classically activate adaptive immunity. Her group was the first to demonstrate T lymphocyte infiltration in the hearts of patients with non-ischemic HF and functionally proved their requirement for adverse cardi-

ac remodeling using experimental models of non-ischemic HF. She reported for the first time that T cell activation was not limited to the lymphoid organs and also occurs within the heart through pathways of cellular communication between T cells and stromal cells. Dr. Alcaide's seminal discoveries demonstrated the ability of cardiac fibroblasts to function as antigen presenting cells that sustain cardiac immune responses. She also identified novel T cell molecular signaling hubs that fine tune T cell activation and can be modulated to reduce cardiac inflammation in HF with reduced and preserved ejection fraction or boost immune responses in cancer. As a result of Dr. Alcaide's scientific contributions, it is now generally accepted that T cell immune responses dominate adverse fibrotic remodeling in HF and that the initial trigger of heart inflammation determines the type of immune response. Dr. Alcaide's contributions to the field open new avenues for selectively targeting cardiac inflammation in different HF etiologies that have different responses to current treatments.

Dr. Alcaide serves as Associate Editor of the *Journal of Molecular and Cellular Cardiology* and the *Journal of Leukocyte Biology*, and is in the Editorial boards of the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* insight, *Circulation Research*, *Circulation: Heart Failure* and the *FASEB Journal*.