Marc Y. Donath is Head of the Clinic for Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism at the University Hospital of Basel, and Research Dean at the University of Basel. His main scientific contribution is the description of an inflammatory process underlying beta cell failure in Type 2 diabetes, with a central role for IL-1beta. On the basis of this he initiated clinical trials in patients with Type 2 diabetes that vindicates this hypothesis and resulting in the development of novel pharmacological approaches. His work has fundamentally contributed to what today is a well-accepted concept that the innate immune system is an integral component in the regulation of metabolism.