

International Exhibition of Hygiene in Dresden 1911 – Establishment of Sports Medicine

Internationale Hygieneausstellung 1911 in Dresden – Sportmedizin etabliert sich

After the successful exhibitions of hygiene in Berlin 1882/83 and the exhibition of "widespread diseases and how to overcome them" in Dresden 1903, preparations for a further exhibition of hygiene already began in 1905.

Its aim was "(... to put into practice the immense advances of the hygienic science, its endeavours and teachings, and to make them known and comprehensible to large sections of the population ...)" (Letter from Dresden's Lord Mayor Bendler to State Minister Posadowski, 21.11.1905). High-ranking representatives of ministries of the German Reich, institutions and associations of hygiene as well as medical faculties set up the organisational committee. The industrialist (Odol-producer) Karl August Lingner from Dresden was elected director.

Under the patronage of the Saxon king August III, the exhibition took place from May 6 to October 31, 1911. The exhibition area covered 320 000 square meters. Nearly all European countries as well as Japan, China and the Philippines showed their exhibits, partly in their own pavilions. The central motto of the exhibition was: "How can the human body be protected by preventive measures or appropriate lifestyle against sudden severe diseases or detrimental effects of even the slightest bad weather conditions?"

Magnet "Sports Laboratory"

With N. Zuntz in charge, a "sports laboratory" equipped according to exemplary standards was opened to the public. In co-operation with F. Kraus, R. Du Bois-Reymond and G.F. Nicolai anthropometric, ergometric and X-ray examinations of athletes were carried out. The athletes trained on the sportsfield in front of the sports laboratory, which was open daily. They also took part in competitions.

Each weekend of the exhibition Mallwitz managed to include several university professors from Berlin in examinations. This was "(... all the more remarkable as conservative physicians would rather smile at the sports section than appreciate it.)"

The six-month exhibition was a great success. Its aim, "(... for once to teach the general public about

hygiene in a big way ...)" (from the leaflet of the 1911 exhibition), was achieved beyond expectation. More than 5 million people came to see it. Financially it closed with a profit of just under a million Reichsmark.

In 1912 the German Museum of Hygiene in Dresden came out of this event. Up to today the museum has effectively worked with regard to health education and is appreciated worldwide.

Impulses pointing the way

The exhibition was also significant for the various fields of health- and performance-promotion. Already existing organisations which applied themselves to sports were given great support.

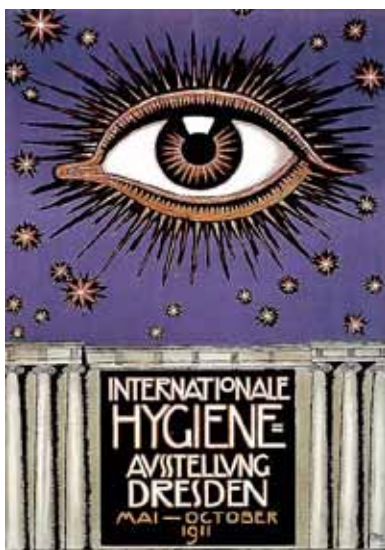
The sports medicine was given impulses pointing the way to establishing an appropriate organisation. In co-operation with the Dresden sports laboratory and the help of the physician and councillor Adolf Gottstein (1857–1941), a permanent laboratory was planned at the municipal playground in Berlin-Charlottenburg. To give reasons for a sports scientific institute a memorandum of 1912 said: "(First and foremost this association aims at continuing the work started in Dresden (...). Furthermore such an institute is justified because of the broadening of medical knowledge involved with it. There are great gaps in our knowledge of the influence of work, exercise, fatigue, relaxation as well as the limits of human capacity generally).

In the spring of 1912 an "Association of the Scientific Research into Sports and Physical Exercises" was founded in Berlin. It took up the aroused interest of physicians in these issues and constituted the beginning of an institutionalised sports medicine. The term sports medicine was not used yet at that time.

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Literature

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International Exhibition of Hygiene in Dresden 1911: Poster by Franz v. Stuck.