

# German Medical Association for the Promotion of Physical Activity (1924 - 1933)

## Deutscher Ärztbund zur Förderung der Leibesübungen (1924 - 1933)

Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, physicians engaged in sports medicine made a major contribution to preparing the refoundation of a sports medical association (F.Hueppe, A. Mallwitz, F.A. Schmidt). Famous promoters such as A. Bier, H. Herxheimer, R. Klapp, W. Kohlrausch, W. Knolland, C. Diem also took part.

The appeal to establish a sports medical association - published in the July issue of the "Monthly Journal for Gymnastics, Games and Sports" - met with a lively response. On 15 July, 1924, about 300 physicians and 100 representatives of authorities and organizations met in Berlin to decide on the foundation of the association.

### Problematic naming again

Ferdinand August Schmidt (Bonn) chaired the negotiations and was elected 1st Chairman of the newly-established sports medical association. The name originally intended "Turn- und Sportärztebund" (Association of Gymnastics- and Sports Physicians) was rejected because of the discrepancies still existing between the camps of "gymnastics" and "sports" (3). Finally the term "Deutscher Ärztbund zur Förderung der Leibesübungen" (DÄBFL) (German Medical Association for the Promotion of Physical Activity) was agreed on.

Apart from the General Meeting, the Great Committee, which represented the regional associations, was responsible for the decision. The following tasks were laid down for the future: running qualification courses, undertaking sports medical examinations, consultations and research and establishing contacts with authorities and associations. Later, a sports therapeutic institute of the DÄBFL was even set up in the vicinity of several sports centres in Berlin-Eichkamp.



Report on the 1st conference of the German Medical Association for the Promotion of Physical Activity.

During the conference, A. Bier presented the main paper on "The necessity of medical participation in physical exercises". Further lectures were given by W. Kohlrausch, R. Klapp, H. Rautmann, G. Mandl, F. Bruns, H. Herxheimer, M. Willner and B. Straßmann.

### Annual conferences and elections up to 1932

Up to 1932, annual conferences of the DÄBFL took place in major cities of the German Reich. The committee and the Chairperson were elected during these meetings. Up to 1929 about 1,400 physicians were acknowledged as qualified sports physicians. Till 1931 the membership rose continually to 2,562.

### Regional associations and consultation centres

The first sports medical consultation centres had already been set up before the DÄBFL was founded (1920 in Hannover and 1921 in Halle/Saale). From 1924 on, the formation of regional sports medical associations brought about the formation of local groups of physicians engaged in sports medicine and consultation centres all over Germany. They were responsible for contacts with the local authorities, other professional organizations of medicine and for organizing further education in sports medicine.

At the "Exhibition of Hygiene, Welfare and Physical Exercise" ("Ge-So-Lei") in Düsseldorf, 1926, the model of a sports medical consultation centre was presented.

In the DÄBFL guide "Facts on physical exercise a physician should really know" (1927), Karl Anton Worringer, the Essen city-physician, wrote: "One of the cleverest Germans of our time who has done a lot for the sports movement, the Lord Mayor of Cologne Dr Adenauer, the creator of Cologne's stadium, has said: Sports is the general practitioner at the sickbed of the German people."

Sports medical examination and consultation activities spread constantly. In the late twenties, hundreds of such institutions under different management existed all over Germany. In 1928, for example, examinations were done free of charge in 12 different consultation centres in Berlin.

No central records were provable on the organization and work of the individual regional associations and local sports medical teams of the German Medical Association for the Promotion of Physical Activity. Documents and proof were merely found in the local medical magazines, the regional papers and in the municipal archives.

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### Literature

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