

Academic Sports Medicine in Germany – There Is a lot to Do!

Universitäre Sportmedizin in Deutschland – es gibt viel zu tun!

The 3-day informal meeting of sport-medical heads of institutes and Professors from Germany, Austria and Switzerland in the Environmental Research Station “Schneefernerhaus”, just below the Zugspitze is just ending. For the second time, much has been discussed and information exchanged here in the snow on Germany’s highest mountain. Discussions included various topics like upcoming new appointments to sports-medical professorships in the coming years, new courses in the curriculum of sports-medical postgraduate training and on the Congress to be held in Hamburg in 2020. The mood was decidedly positive and harmonious and everyone thought the meeting a great enrichment, with adequate time for personal conversations and exchange of ideas, whether in the meeting room with its spectacular view of the white peaks of the alps or evenings in front of the screen where a National League soccer game was shown or during the leisurely meals on the sun terrace or evenings chatting until the wee hours.

The opinions of the professors made it clear that German sports medicine has gone through many low points over the past 10 years, was often shack-

led, in fact, and for this reason missed addressing important topics of further developments in the specialty. This is almost diametrically opposed to the growing scientific importance and perception in the population of physical activity in the prevention and therapy of diseases (“Exercise is Medicine”).

Sports-medical Professorships in Germany

Actually, strengthening of the sports-medical facilities at Universities should have been expected from academicians and politicians, but the opposite is the case and some sports-medical professorships have been left vacant in the past and for others, the future appears uncertain. The postgraduate time has also been shortened, which will result in a loss of quality in education. It is fortunate that Prof. Dr. Jürgen Scharhag has just been appointed to fill the vacancy in the sports-medical/performance-physiological professorship in Vienna, Prof. Dr. Johannes Scherr will become Head of Sports Medicine at the University of Zurich-Balgrist as of 1. April 2019, and also the W3 professorship for Exercise Medicine in Hamburg will soon announce that a successor to Prof. Dr. Klaus-Michael Braumann is being sought. Clear positive signals which, >



Abbildung 1

The Environmental Research Station Schneefernerhaus on the Zugspitze.

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Abbildung 2

Participants in the Zugspitze Meeting and Program Commission of the Sports, Medicine & Health Summit 2020. From left: Claus Reinsberger, Joannes Scherr, Lisa Kempfer, Jürgen Scharhag, Andreas Nieß, Nils Schumacher, Anja Hirschmüller, Jürgen M. Steinacker, Rüdiger Reer, Klaus-Michael Braumann, Kai Röcker.

however, must urgently be further developed in content, especially supported by the new DGSP President Prof. Dr. Bernd Wolfarth from Berlin and his Council.

Curriculum Sports Medicine

It is also very heartening that the Curriculum Sports Cardiology - the underlying concept of postgraduate education for the additional qualification as “Sports Cardiologist” - was recently finalized, a joint initiative of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Kardiologie (DGK) und Deutschen Gesellschaft für Sportmedizin und Prävention (DGSP).

First initiated by the European Association of Preventive Cardiology (EAPC) as one of the seven subgroups of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC), this curriculum was implemented for the first time in Europe in Germany and the first courses held for qualification. This underlines the growing importance of interaction between sports medicine and cardiology, an interaction which has existed in Germany since the 1960s in high-performance sport and cardiovascular rehabilitation. Current studies on physical training at different intensities following acute cardiac infarction in the early phase as early as 5 days after the infarction, broad randomized studies on physical training in diastolic or systolic heart failure, with left-ventricular support systems or following heart transplant clearly illustrate the constant advances in sports-medical-cardiological research in Germany.

It also shows how closely sports medicine and cardiology are cooperating to find solutions for practical queries. Thanks to the growing scientific interest of cardiological-academic departments in the role of physical training for cardiology patients, for example at the Charité in Berlin, in Greifswald, Leipzig, Dresden, Hannover and Munich, the interactions of the two areas is becoming closer. Maybe the concurrent ESC presidency of Prof. Dr. Stephan Achenbach from Cardiology Erlangen and me, as president of the European Association of Preventive Cardiology (EAPC) of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) as of 2020 can provide further impulses and strengthen this direction, while making clear the specific competencies of sports medicine within cardiology at the same time.

High above the mountains of Germany, Austria and Switzerland, there was a great deal of discussion about a new mutual D-A-CH (D=Germany/Deutschland; A=Austria; CH=Switzerland. The international license plate ID letters together form the German word for “roof“ or metaphorically “abode”) for German sports medicine. The awakening was clearly felt. But there is a lot to do! ■