"Transfer of knowledge at eye level"

An interview with Dr Fred Bergmann, President of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Orale Implantologie (DGOI), the German society for oral implantology

After the last ICOI World Congress in autumn 2015, Dr Fred Bergmann was elected the third President of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Orale Implantologie (DGOI), the German society for oral implantology. Ahead of this year’s congress in Barcelona in Spain, Dental Tribune International spoke with the expert, who has 20 years of clinical experience, about current changes in the DGOI’s educational offering and the international developments in implant dentistry.

Dental Tribune International: Dr Bergmann, what challenges are you going to address in particular during your three-year presidency?
Dr Fred Bergmann: As a scientific society for implant dentists, the DGOI needs to become even more attractive and relevant. To this end, we are going to expand our curriculum and adapt it to the most recent trends, such as digitisation and 3-D diagnostics, in particular. First and foremost, however, the practical aspects of the curricula will be strengthened.

Another important issue that I intend to address is the establishment of a nation-wide coaching network of certified implant experts. These coaches will act as mentors and course participants will be able to call on them for individual advice in planning, implementation and even supervision during surgeries.

Under the slogan "WIR FÜR DICH—NEXT TO YOU", the DGOI offers an education programme that aims to help dentists master their first steps into implantology. Could you please explain this approach?

With the motto "WIR FÜR DICH—NEXT TO YOU", we aim at providing the transfer of knowledge at eye level. This is a central objective, especially among our younger colleagues, who desired a transfer of knowledge with a personal training approach.

In order to fulfil the need of the participants for more personal contact, the concepts of our fairs and congresses will have to change too in the near future.

The 13th international annual congress of the DGOI, which will be held from 30 September to 1 October at the Europa-Park resort, for example, will include a comprehensive workshop programme. Thus, participants will be able to apply what they have learnt on the spot under the supervision of the lecturer.

How will the DGOI promote its international pursuits?
As a German society, the focus of our activities is clearly in Germany. However, it is necessary to think outside the box and to support the exchange of knowledge at an international level. With regard to this, it is our aim to meet the demand for new perspectives in addition to those already familiar to our members through their studies.

We are creating space for articles in English within our Orale Implantologie journal in the form of a section called the "International Corner". In addition, we are creating an area for our international partners on our new website, which will be launched in the next quarter, to publish cases and reports. Moreover, a number of workshops at the annual congress will be held in English.

As an exclusive partner of the International Congress of Oral Implantologists (ICOI) in Germany, we are, of course, influenced by trends in other countries. In Italy, for example, the topics of immediate implantation and aesthetics are given much greater attention than in Germany—in this respect, we can definitely profit from knowledge import.

Furthermore, our programmes are offered in various European countries and are predominantly presented by local speakers.

In your long-time practise, you have treated over 15,000 implant cases already. In your opinion, what trends have had the most impact over the last several years?
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Over the past few years, we have seen a reduction in augmentation towards atraumatic implant placement, with smaller, shorter implants and biological concepts. In the future, augmentation will also become patient friendly through prefabricated blocks manufactured from human or alloplastic materials.

Progressive technological development is also evident in implantology. Therefore, 3-D diagnostics, virtual planning and new forms of navigation, such as dynamic navigation, without guides are increasingly gaining importance.

In addition, a change oriented towards human needs has taken place in education. As mentioned before, the collaborative approach is becoming more and more important. Moreover, the work-life balance need has been given special priority. As a society, we also have to address these trends, in order to fulfil our members’ wishes and expectations: educational offerings are becoming more flexible, transfer of knowledge does not occur in a typical teaching setting, but is shaped by a partnership-based approach, in which students and mentors work together for implant treatment success.

Only recently, DENTSPLY International and Sirona announced the successful completion of their merger. The new company Dentsply Sirona is thus the world’s largest manufacturer of dental products for dentists and dental technicians. What consequences will the merger have for the global dental market and the daily work of implantologists?

On the one hand, mergers create synergies, of course. In the case of Dentsply Sirona, imaging and digital technologies are combined with a range of implant solutions, which leads to more customer-focused products.

On the other hand, mergers of global players restrict the product diversity on the market. Competition is a driver of innovation, not only in dentistry but in industry in general.

We will have to see what this development will bring about.