“We are constantly trying to maintain our technological lead”

An interview with Audrey Stefani, Dr Stephan Gruner & Dr Khaled A. Balto

It all started with a nerve broach in 1907. MICRO-MEGA, whose headquarters are located in Besançon (France), has been manufacturing endodontic tools for over a hundred years and played a decisive role in endodontics through new developments. Internationally, the innovative company has a recognised reputation of being a specialist in dental instruments. At this year’s Adviser Group for Endodontics (AGE) meeting, roots met with Audrey Stefani, MICRO-MEGA Marketing Manager; Dr Stephan Gruner, Country Manager MICRO-MEGA Germany; and Dr Khaled A. Balto (Saudi Arabia), Associate Professor and moderator of the AGE meeting.

roots: Mrs Stefani, for over a century MICRO-MEGA has been operating successfully in the dental market. Could you tell us anything in particular that stands out for you in the company’s history?

Audrey Stefani: MICRO-MEGA is proud of having set international milestones with handpieces and contra-angle handpieces, micro-motors, endodontic files and NiTi files.

A fact that perhaps only a few people know is that MICRO-MEGA used to be the sole manufacturer of handpieces and contra-angle handpieces for the large brands in Germany and other countries.

The Citoject, for example, was a MICRO-MEGA product, manufactured under Heraeus’ own brand for Heraeus. Today, it is still available as LigaJect from MICRO-MEGA, even after it was phased out of production. To a considerable degree, the company was characterised by being able to launch world-first innovations on the market regularly, and we are able to build on this expertise today.
What MICRO-MEGA products have set standards on the international dental markets?

MICRO-MEGA inventions have set world standards; for example, in 1957 with the first dismountable handpieces with tungsten-carbide bearings; in 1963, Giromatic, the first contra-angle handpiece able to produce an alternating 90° rotation and specially made root-canal tools; in 1964, micro-motors with 40,000 rotations per minute, on the basis of which micro-motors are built today by all manufacturers; in 1974, the Masserann Kit for the removal of fractured endodontic tools from root canals; in 1996, HERO 642, a clear and simple system of rotary NiTi files; in 2002, HERO Shaper, a rotary NiTi file system. I could go on with this list indefinitely.

All these experiences led to the development of the Revo-S file system, which was launched in 2009. This system enables a root-canal preparation with only three files. Revo-S is currently state-of-the-art technology; however, development is ongoing, which is why we hold the AGE symposium every year.

In autumn 2009, MICRO-MEGA joined a group of companies under the management of SycoTec. In March of this year, the Canadian SciCan joined the European duo. The group is now amongst the top ten manufacturers of dental equipment worldwide. What opportunities does such a strong group offer?

One great asset is that we are able to join forces and learn from one another. Our focus here in Europe naturally lies in Germany and France, but we are also going to enter new markets. If possible, we will use joint marketing, and joint research and development in order to consolidate our position on the market. An important part of the strategy is to maintain and further the SciCan and MICRO-MEGA brands.

Is the name of the group still under debate?

Indeed, we have debated this for a while but have finally agreed on a name. I am proud to announce that MICRO-MEGA, SciCan and SycoTec are members of the Sanavis Group.

The AGE meeting has once again helped us progress scientifically.

Dr Stephan Gruner

Have your expectations of this year’s AGE meeting been met?

The AGE meeting has once again helped us progress scientifically thanks to top-notch research results presented by the speakers. During our internal MICRO-MEGA sessions, we were able to discuss international market demands further, which were then tested for feasibility and formed into projects.

Prof Shimon Friedman lectured on The endodontic treatment outcome: The impact of the new technologies. Would you please summarise the most important points for us?

Prof Friedman is world-renowned in the field of endodontics. Together with co-authors Dr Thuan Dao, Audrey Stefani
et al., he authored the world famous Toronto Study, a series of articles in the Journal of Endodontics. This is an extensive piece of work that illustrates and analyses the status of endodontics, starting with the publication of the first results in the year 2000 up to and including 2010.

In his excellent lecture, Prof Friedman made clear that differences in the evaluation and success or failure of an endodontic treatment greatly depend on the methods and structure of the evaluating studies themselves. If the correct evaluation criteria are applied, the success rate of endodontic treatments over the last ten years is around 88 to 95%. Amongst the various authors, a high consistency of results is noticeable. These studies are encouraging.

The new product Revo-S was a part of further presentations. Dr Balto, in connection with the innovative Revo-S concept you also spoke about the ‘third dimension’ of endodontic treatment. Would you please illustrate the main points of the system?

Dr Khaled A. Balto: In general, endodontic rotary systems are evaluated with regard to the parameters of geometric features, taper, tip size, etc. Therefore, the equation for efficiency of a given file has long been considered to be inner core size and symmetric design (which means perfect geometry), which results in stronger files. After 17 years of using Rotary NiTi files, we have learned that the equation for efficiency is rather the asymmetric design and efficient clearing of dentinal debris. This understanding was applied in the conception of the Revo-S system.

Revo-S is the result of 17 years of critical performance analysis. As Deputy Director of the Center of Excellence for Osteoporosis Research in Jeddah, my current research focuses on osteoporosis as it relates to oral health. Since I returned from Harvard Dental School, where I received my D.M.Sc., the essence of my research interest has remained the same, which is in brief: cellular and molecular mediators of infection-induced bone destruction, evidence-based dentistry and other clinical endodontic research.

Apart from publishing, how do you exchange information with international colleagues?

The world has become a small village thanks to the recent developments in information and communication technology. The Internet is the driving force for today’s information exchange. Online publishing, discussion forums, YouTube, etc. make it easy to stay in touch and remain updated on new developments. In my opinion, postgraduate training programmes in endodontics constitute the most important cornerstone. As Director of the Saudi Board of Endodontics, I have the privilege of reviewing articles and thus am constantly kept up to date on what’s new. Additionally, I value the international interaction that is possible through conferences and meetings like the AGE meeting.

We would like to thank you for this interview and wish you continuing success.

Editorial note: The interview was led by Jeannette Enders and Steffi Goldmann.