

**Opening of the 10th Annual International Congress of the ISMST,  
Toronto June 7th 2007**

The 10th congress of the ISMST is a jubilee congress and therefore an occasion to look back for some minutes and to devote some thoughts to the presence and the future of our Society.

It was just a year before our international shockwave-user-association was founded as an European Society first, as we met together to a shockwave symposium at Kassel, Germany. By the means of an experimental study, presented by a well known German experimental researcher, as well as by one of the first randomized clinical studies concerning shockwave treatment, we have been informed that there is not any evidence of shockwave efficacy to bone formation or pain release, and by a representative of the German social insurance, that therefore they wouldn't cover any expences for shockwave treatment in the future. In the following discussion I told them, most of us in the auditorium having experienced already those efficacy, wouldn't like to hear that there is no efficacy but would like to get an answer by more competent studies, why it is effective, and also what are really the proper preconditions for an efficient shockwave treatment.

This experience was one of the reasons for founding our scientific Society.

In the following years we have learned a lot about the physical properties of the shockwaves. The producers have reached an agreement for the definition what their devices are providing. In serious randomized multicenter university clinical studies only a low efficacy of shockwave treatment in certain indications has become evident, but in comparable studies of the same quality level, performed by other investigators just the contrary and a high efficacy in the same indications was proven, leading even to the acknowledgement by the FDA. By the placebo shockwave treatment in all the randomized studies more patients have been deceived than by any other treatment, but nevertheless in some studies 70 percent of them have reached also a significant improvement. Therefore we have gotten a new sight at the scientific value of clinical studies in the concept we have been using at this time and often are still using nowadays. As a side effect musculoskeletal ESWT became one of the most critically examined new medical therapies. On the other hand all attempts and even the foundation of the ISF failed to create at first clinical field studies as recommended by very competent methologists, to find out the right dosage, the optimal energy flux density, the optimal method of generating the shockwaves and the optimal appliance as a common basis for any comparable studies, because no user was willing to contribute by a more comprehensive documentation of his daily work. Thereover most of the producers did not trust in such an open research and in the benefit for all of them, and therefore didn't support the project, but preferred to remain in competition to each other.

So my questions in the mentioned symposium in Kassel concerning the clinical use of shockwave treatment have been not really answered by clinical studies even up to now with a few exceptions, and this would be a very disappointing fact, if – yes if – there wouldn't have been done a lot of experimental work in the same time too. The research started often in an unprejudiced manner of trial and error, but last not least leading to quite another approach to clinical application than all those clinical studies and with a far field of indications we never thought to be possible before. By

this work in my opinion the shockwave application is on the best way to become one of the most important medical progresses in general and in many special therapeutic fields of modern medicine. The get-together for early information about all these research ideas, results and new developements has become the main purpose of this Society, justifying its further existence. In addition to the experimental work of Gerdesmayer, Russo, Wang and Neuland in the past, to quote only some of the investigators, the great number of presentations of experimental work in this Toronto meeting will enlarge again our information about the possibilities of shockwave treatment for clinical use.

The increasing number of indications for shockwave treatment does not only open a benefit for an increasing number of patients, but means also an increasing market and therefore is offering an increasing chance to the producers to sell their devices. They all profit in this way from the results in shockwave research and most of them have understood the value of the open communication and advice of this scientific community. But no one of them may derive by these recommendations an exclusive pretension to a certain *medical* indication as a newcomer amongst the producers did a short time ago, bringing an action against our scientific secretary because of the use of different devices in the same indication. This is a serious confusion of a medical treatment with a business deal in competition to the other producers and should never be, especially in a country which is proud of its sense for freedom and liberality. If such a claim succeeds, this would mean an end of any open research and the open communication of its results, as we are all in need for.

To prepare such a congress is a tremendous work and I want to thank already now those persons who made this meeting possible: First of all our president Rob Gordon, the shockwave pioneer and promotor in Canada who is offering this treatment to a bigger cicle of users than we ever had before, our General Secretary Vinzenz Auersperg who has become the head of the Orthopedic Department in Steyr, Austria at the same time as he has become our General Secretary and his charming wife Catherine who is his helpful spirit and responsible to enable him for so much work that it means. I want to thank also Richi Thiele, the "spiritus rector" of our Society, who was busy to stimulate the producers and distributors to deal with the meeting and to manage again a comprehensive exhibition. And last not least Wolfi Schaden, the mister shockwave pure and simple, whose scientific knowledges and whose connections to the shockwave community all over the world is still the basis of our Society, of the research coordination and the tool for our conference shedule in Toronto as well. His engagement and his fire succeeded this year even in a presentation by an American Nobel prize laureat.

I hope it is also in Your sense to say them all many thanks. They have earned already now Your applause and with this applause we should start in a marvellous and interesting Congress !