Graduation of the first Mastership Course of AALZ Greece

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_**Participants of the first Mastership/Fellowship Course** offered by AALZ Greece have graduated. AALZ's course is a one-year clinical specialisation course for laser treatment at selected wavelengths. This offering is geared towards dentists who would like to specialise in certain wavelengths. Over the course of ten days spread over one year, participants are taught fundamental physical and technical knowledge and how to recognise primary, secondary, and tertiary indications.

The course, which is split into four modules, started on 14 November 2010. AALZ's Director and Mastership Course Director Prof Norbert Gutknecht and General Manager Mr Leon Vanweersch initiated and welcomed the participants by giving them the first guidelines to support them in their studies.

The first day of the course was dedicated to the Laser Safety Officer Course. This is a one-day course that offers official certification as a Laser Safety Officer (LSO; this course is a prerequisite for laser use). The innovative treatment methods of laser therapy pose risks for both practitioners and their teams, as well as for patients, if fundamental technical, biological and physical information about the application and laser safety measures is not or insufficiently known. Dr René Franzen gave the participants an in-depth understanding of laser physics and laser-tissue interaction, preparing them for using lasers safely. This was followed by an examination for the LSO certificate. Our laser safety courses meet trade association requirements for obtaining expertise as an LSO. They are officially recognised according to the guidelines of BGV B2 (follows EN 60825-1 and ANSI Z136.1) and the State Radiation Protection Office.

On the second day, laser structure, function and handling of laser systems and laser-tissue interaction were taught. In addition, participants were introduced to AALZ's exclusive e-learning platform (ILIAS). Each participant was required to use the system, interacting with the lecturers and with the other participants and participating in the ILIAS forum, where questions and answers on lasers were posted and discussed.

The second module was presented from 28 February to 1 March 2011. Nd:YAG, diode low and high power, and CO_2 lasers were covered in this module and Prof Gutknecht explained the theoretical and biophysical

background, clinical indications and clinical importance in various fields of dentistry (e.g. periodontics, implantology, endodontics and soft-tissue surgery) to the participants.

The third module was presented from 8 to 10 May 2011. The erbium laser family (Er:YAG and Er,Cr:YSGG) was the subject of Prof Gutknecht's lectures over these three days. Every aspect of erbium lasers was analysed in detail and the participants had the opportunity to answer the vast number of questions they had.

We were then finally at the point at which our participants were preparing for the examinations at RWTH Aachen University. Apart from the written exam, the presentation of five clinical cases is essential. Guidelines and protocols were given to the dentists so they could prepare and demonstrate the laser treatments that they offer to their patients. The two months until the exams in Aachen were precious in order for them to prepare adequately.

On 13 July 2011, we flew to RWTH University in the beautiful city of Aachen. The written examination was held on the next day and the clinical presentations were delivered to the committee by the dentists the day after. Prof Gutknecht headed the four-member evaluation committee, which included Drs Franzen, Antonis Kallis and Dimitris Strakas.

In the afternoon, a reception and gala dinner hosted by AALZ was held in the exceptional Hotel Kasteel Bloemendal. The graduation ceremony for awarding diplomas to successful participants was well planned and afterwards everyone enjoyed dinner in a friendly and pleasant environment.

Invaluable are the remarks by participants that characterised their experience of AALZ's course. This is what participants said about our programme:

"Starting the Mastership Course on November, I did not expect to meet such a serious and simultaneously pleasant experience with exceptional organisation and high level of scientific-based lectures. Practically, the help of the Greek 'pioneer' colleagues Antonis and Dimitris and the German professors, especially Prof Gutknecht, which I thank, made me change the philosophy of my dental clinic in terms of modern technological innovations. The comprehension and usage of different wavelengths made it easier for me to implement lasers in my everyday dental treatments."

Dr Evangelos Dimitriou, Athens

"Before the Mastership Course Lasers in Dentistry, I felt like a blind man, using a laser. Now I feel stronger, owing to the high level of education of AALZ, of the great team working in this programme in Greece and Germany and of course to Prof Gutknecht, a real teacher and leader."

Dr Pantelis Mavridis, Drama

"Great experience: A must-do programme for anyone who wants to work with dental lasers. It has helped me to use 100 % of the capabilities of my laser and not just by following given guidelines. It helps you understand how lasers work so that you can work with them effectively. Also for those who do not have any laser equipment but want to start working with laser, it will help them choose what is right for them and choose the right machine with the correct capabilities."

Dr Cristos Tzimogiannis, Ioannina

The second Mastership Course will start on 3 December 2011 in Athens:

Module I: 3–4 December 2011 (two days);
Module II: 5–8 February 2012 (four days);
Module III: 6–9 May 2012 (four days);
Module IV: 10–11 September 2012 (two days).

The programme is presented in English and the exams are held at RWTH Aachen University in Germany. For more information, you can visit our website at www.aalz.gr or e-mail us at aalzgreece@gmail.com._