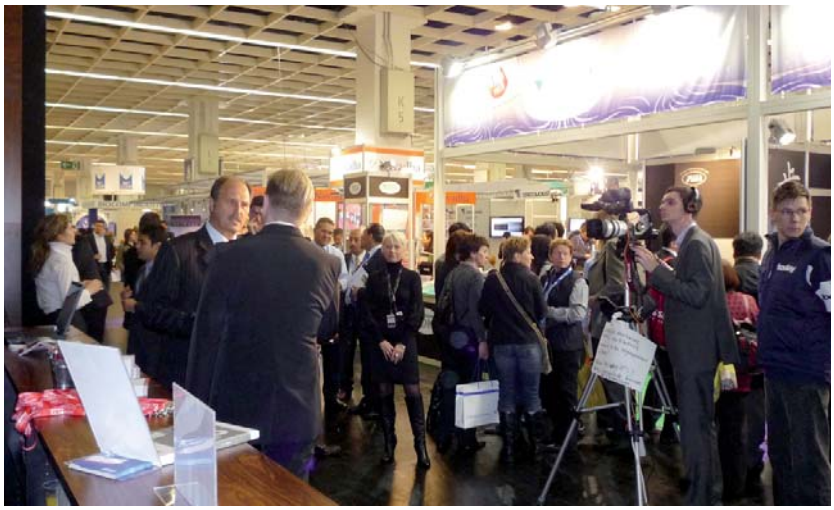
Laser dentistry is booming

An interview with Prof Dr Norbert Gutknecht

author_Editorial Office

On the occasion of IDS 2009, the international leading trade fair for dentists, dental technicians, dental industry as well as for specialist dental trade, we met Prof Dr Norbert Gutknecht from RWTH Aachen University at the booth of Oemus Media AG.



_Global economic slowdown—heard about everywhere. Do you also notice the economic slowdown in the dental sector?

Yes, if you listen into the dental market you hear of course some complaints. But I think the dental market does not suffer as much as other industries. Especially when I walk through the exhibition I see all the ready-for-innovation technologies and I notice a completely different tendency. We progress against the general stream. Here you can see that people are ready for investing. Moreover, people are ready to open niches mainly in particular technologies in dentistry. Therefore, I have the impression that we are spared from the downturn at the moment.

_That sounds positive. The topic "innovative technologies" is a very good bridge to laser technology. You are a specialist in this field and on the laser market. What do you think about this specific sector that has paced up and down?

Especially in that sector I can see this development abundantly clear. If you look back one or two years many critics of laser technology said that it has been only a dayfly that will come to nothing. Here on IDS, we can observe that not only the well-established laser producers have attended this trade fair for many years. Many new manufacturers are present from countries that have not played a role on the laser market yet, eg China. We can see a development that I consider as positive. We are not only moving upwards we already arrived on the up and up. Especially in this field the increasing interest in the technology can be seen. Manufacturers that have not dealt with it yet, due to their basic principles or basic products, now present a laser on their booth.

_You are President of the German Society for Laser Dentistry (DGL) and President of the World Federation for Laser Dentistry (WFLD). Which contributions make these two societies to education and training in laser dentistry?

This is a very important subject for both societies. The WFLD is a global organisation associating almost all national societies. It is very important that the education and training is put on an ethically solid base. The education should be founded on evidenced-based laser dentistry. All offshoots, may I put it in this way, in which everybody feels called upon performing laser dentistry education without having attended a profound education themselves should be overcome.

Especially the last point has brought many criticisms. Our goal in Germany, as can be seen in the association with DGZMK and collaboratively executing and arranging the last German Dentists Conference, is offering a sound education for resident dentists who did not learn laser technology during their academic studies. Therefore, we have to start at point zero. We have to educate and train dentists in a way that they are able to treat patients in a competent ethically way and take over leadership in therapeutic achievements. The same applies to the WFLD, I can say in the same breath. The rules we represent in Germany I would like to see in every laser dentistry society worldwide.

_We are not meeting coincidentally at the Oemus Media AG booth. In your hands you hold the brand new international laser magazine. Are you satisfied with the issue?

I am very, very proud of it. The WFLD has not have an own brand, no journal or magazine in which the user could identify themselves. It has been very important for us that this international laser magazine is not a scientific journal. There are already enough of those on the market. It has been crucial for us to show the users that the laser not only has its eligibility but also advantages in treatment by means of case studies and summarised scientifically studies. On the other hand this magazine provides independent product information. The users can make free decisions about what he/she would like to see. There are so many different fields. Additionally, societies are recognized. They have a forum to present their congresses and education offers. Moreover, they can report about new strategies and goals. I think we have published a very interesting magazine not only in this context. First resonances I have received are very positive. Why? Because we have caught the spirit of the times.

Prof Dr Gutknecht, thank you very much for your time.

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