The World Congress as a turning point for laser dentistry

From 1 to 3 October, the 16th World Congress in Laser Dentistry was hosted in Aachen, Germany, giving international dental professionals the opportunity to network and learn about the latest developments in their field of expertise. Leon Vanweersch, member of the organising committee, spoke to Dental Tribune Online about the event, being promoted as the largest ever, and about his commitment to laser education as Business Development Manager at the Aachen Dental Laser Center (AALZ).

Mr Vanweersch, this year's World Congress in Laser Dentistry was expected to be the most successful, of the highest scientific level, and the biggest and most international World Federation for Laser Dentistry conference ever. Did it meet the attendees' expectations?

First of all, it was our intention to make this congress a turning point in the set-up and structure of executing such congresses. This congress integrated science and practical experience on different levels of presentations and demonstrations, including by highly rated international keynote speakers, on-stage live patient demonstrations, interactive digital poster presentations, oral presentations combined with relevant clinical skill training, short presentations on the latest research findings, outstanding clinical case presentations, company-supported workshops, and certificates for continuing education credits. We welcomed participants from all over the world travelling to Germany from 49 countries, such as Canada, Australia, China and Argentina. There were more than 200 presentations spread over the three days in a huge programme. In addition, our social events have certainly beaten those of all past World Federation for Laser Dentistry congresses.

> "I personally think that every high-standard dental clinic today should have integrated laser or laser-assisted dentistry in their therapies."

What were your personal programme highlights?

Besides the fact that I am proud to have welcomed so many international attendees, I am personally very happy and excited to have welcomed back so many Aachen graduates from our mastership and MSc courses all over the world, which made this event also a kind of reunion

Fig. 1: Leon Vanweersch, member of the organising committee.





Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Fig. 2: The attendees were enjoying a great number of programme highlights such as the get together in the exhibition area on the first day of the congress. **Fig. 3:** Ever since, *laser—international magazine of laser dentistry* is the official media partner of DGL/ISLD. **Fig. 4:** Prof. Dr Norbert Gutknecht, President of the International Society for Laser Dentistry (ISLD).

of the AALZ–WALED [World Academy for Laser Education and Research in Dentistry] family. Besides the high scientific level of the plenary speakers we secured for the congress, I am sure that the gala event was an absolute highlight.

The congress was held under the theme "Three decades of laser innovation". What is the status of laser technology in international dentistry at present?

I personally think that every high-standard dental clinic today should have integrated laser or laser-assisted dentistry in their therapies, in order to claim to be innovative and state-of-the-art.

How did you initially become involved with laser dentistry?

I started already in 1992, together with Prof. Dr Norbert Gutknecht, the first laser safety officer courses for dentists in Germany at RWTH Aachen University. Over the next few years, we started to offer laser workshops in Germany and later also internationally. From 1994 on, we additionally organised the national congress of the German Society of Laser Dentistry every year. Under the leadership of Prof. Gutknecht, we did many research projects for various laser companies. An absolute highlight was the worldwide initiation of the first Master of Science in Lasers in Dentistry programme at RWTH Aachen University in 2004. For many years, we have been organising one-year mastership courses in dental laser therapy in many countries worldwide, and have produced more than 1,000 laser dentists in the time at the AALZ.

Mr Vanweersch, thank you for your time.

contact

Leon Vanweersch
Aachen Dental Laser Center – AALZ
Pauwelsstraße 17
52074 Aachen, Germany
www.aalz.de