New directions in implantology—where is the journey heading?

An interview with Dr Georg Bach, President of DGZI, Germany

Fig. 1: Dr Georg Bach.

Like in our own lives, no path is straight in implantology. Again and again, there are forks in the road and one is faced with the decision of whether to go left or right or perhaps continue straight ahead. In everyday practice, new treatment methods, innovative implantology concepts and new materials form these different paths. The 51st international annual congress of the German Association of Dental Implantology (DGZI) will take participants on a journey on 30 September and 1 October in Berlin in Germany, showing them which of the many paths ultimately lead to successful treatment. In this interview with DGZI President Dr Georg Bach, readers can find out what they can particularly look forward to this year.

Dr Bach, the DGZI has been in existence for 51 years, making it the oldest European professional society in dental implantology. Where does the DGZI stand today?
The DGZI was founded in Bremen in 1970, so we are actually in our 52nd year of existence. Regarding the current standing of the DGZI, one could say that everything and nothing has changed at the DGZI. Compared with the initial situation at the beginning of the seventies, simply everything has changed; indeed, one could say that our founders, under the leadership of Prof. Hans Grafelmann, clearly had greater vision and courage than therapeutic options. Millions of inserted implants, 3D diagnostics, digital planning and insertion aids, and many other implantological therapy options that we take for granted today could only have been dreamed of back then. As a professional society, the DGZI has not only witnessed and understood all these significant changes but also always played an active role in shaping them.

These fascinating new options in implantology have been accompanied by a serious need to gain expertise through learning practical skills and being taught theory. Against the background of this realisation, the DGZI has set up a large number of continuing education formats to meet the constantly increasing demands in dental implantology. In this respect, to come back to your question, the DGZI is very well positioned.

When I said before that nothing has changed, I meant that we have remained true to the values of our founders over half a century ago. Our credo is still to present dental implantology with all its fascinating facets to the practitioner and to equip him or her for this special discipline. That was true in 1970 and is still true in 2022!

Last year, the DGZI held its anniversary congress in Cologne in Germany. Will this year's congress repeat that success?
We intend to have another great success with our congress this year, which, by the way, will be hosted in the federal capital of Berlin. But it is clear that we cannot repeat such an event as we experienced last year. The 2021 event in Cologne was a great congress with truly wonderful moments! It is definitely not possible to repeat this on demand, because in addition to the who's who of German oral implantology speaking there and panel discussions in which all three presidents of the major German implantological societies came together on one stage and exchanged ideas, our 50th congress was also marked by other, almost magical moments. Something like that is unique, just like our half-century of the DGZI, and we want to keep it that way! But what we continue to focus on, and this should also be the aspiration for this year's congress in Berlin, is setting the guidelines in implantology. Our visitors should not only know where our joint implantological journey is going, but also be able to play a significant role in shaping the route. We have had this aspiration for the past 50 years and will continue to have it for the next 50 years!

Fig. 2: Prof. Ralf Smeets, Prof. Knut A. Grötz, Dr Georg Bach, Prof. Daniel Grubeanu and Prof. Bilal Al-Nawas (from left). **Fig. 3:** The table clinics: a wide variety of implantology topics will be discussed at 25 tables.

In implantology, there are often subjects of great debate, such as bone augmentation and choice of material. Will such topics also be addressed?
The fact is that every patient is a challenge! As individual as our patients are, so too are their initial conditions, expectations and therapy options. We are all aware that against this background very difficult decisions have to be made. We will be addressing this in Berlin in autumn, presenting, illuminating and questioning such areas of conflict regarding bone augmentation, implant prostheses and choice of implant material and giving practice-relevant evaluations, and we will also be consciously asking the question of whether the high-end solution is always the best choice.

What can participants look forward to in Berlin?
They can look forward to a challenging two-day training event, packed with knowledge and tips. We have been able to engage a top-class university team of speakers, as well as numerous practitioners, for the lectures and live broadcasts. I have already mentioned that so much has changed in dentistry and in implantology. One thing, however, has remained unchanged: expertise in implantology depends primarily on practical experience but also on innovative products. During the table clinics, participants will have the opportunity for intensive discussions with the speakers, who will be giving their views on a wide range of special implantology topics at 25 table clinics. Our English-speaking guests will have the benefit of simultaneous interpretation.

The aim of our programme for young dentists, for example Dr Jochen Tunkel speaking on social media and Dr Eik Schiegnitz on current implantological developments, is to give congress participants something to take away, namely the latest findings on the current top topics in implantology.

Beyond this goal of information provision, however, is our desire to ask participants what they would like to learn more about: we have asked the young generation in the DGZI what is on their minds. And that's not all! We not only have listened to our young colleagues, but are also letting them have their say. The last part of our future podium on the Friday, which bears the designation "Young Generation DGZI" for the first time this year, will be a discussion. In past decades, this discussion has always been very lively and highly interesting, and I expect the same this year. The message we hope to convey with it is: young implantologists—we listen to you, we take your needs seriously and we want to accommodate you!

Finally, what goals does this year's annual meeting of the DGZI have for dentists working in implantology?
Our aspiration in this regard is clearly defined. We have two goals. Firstly, we aim for our participants to be able to apply some of the knowledge that they have gained during the two days of training in practice on the following Monday. Secondly, we want dentists to be able to rely on the durability of what is presented and evaluated at a DGZI congress.

As an implantological society, we pride ourselves on being authentic, honest and reliable.

Dr Georg Bach

DGZI

Registration & programme

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