



A meeting of minds— Seeing is believing

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From 16 to 18 September 2010, over 300 delegates from 30 different countries assembled in Vilnius, Lithuania, for the second congress of the European Society of Microscope Dentistry (ESMD). I have attended several meetings dedicated to microscope dentistry during my career and have to admit that this one was as good as they get.

Simply put, the better you can see something, the better you can understand and treat it, and, thanks to the great imaging ability of microscopes, the better you can document and share the information with your patients and colleagues. For those of us who have already adopted this technology in our daily work, there is no going back. Today, the operating microscope (OM) is no longer only used by endodontists. Prosthodontists and periodontists equally are enhancing their treatments with magnification, illumination and documentation.

On the first day of the programme, delegates were able to select from a variety of hands-on workshops, including microsurgery suturing, non-surgical endodontics, precision preparation techniques for

crowns and veneers, 3-D obturation techniques, soft-tissue management around implants and microsurgical reconstructive procedures. Alternatively, master classes in practice management, digital imaging, matrix-free composite build-ups, laser use, tooth discolouration treatment and 3-D diagnosis were offered. The main programme, which offered introductory workshops on microscope use, allowed international speakers to demonstrate their expertise and the accuracy of their periodontal, prosthodontic and endodontic skills. The wonderful aspect of presentations at today's meetings is the tangible manner in which information can be presented through video and still photography taken through the OM—and not only one or two images but a whole stream of pictures that really convey the techniques, benefits and outcomes of the treatment. This is a level of discussion, education and knowledge transfer that was previously not possible.

An innovative and successful live demonstration of a periodontal surgery, performed by Dr Jan Behring, and a molar preparation, performed by Dr Horst

Behring, was offered via satellite link from a dental clinic in Hamburg, Germany. The presentations, which were moderated by Prof Stefan Ioan Stratul (Romania), alternated between the two treatment rooms in the clinic as the procedures progressed. Most of the images shown in the main lecture hall came from full-HD video cameras mounted on the clinicians' OMs. I have to congratulate my colleagues on presenting these procedures in real time (!) to over 200 eager attendees, who were also able to ask questions throughout the treatment process. In fact, the entire session was a logistical, educational and treatment triumph!

A selection of workshops and lectures on staff and practice management interspersed the programme and was received with much interest. Dentists who use OMs are very focused on their clinical skills. However, microscope use requires a good support team and a securely based business. Additionally, it is true that patients do not judge us based on our clinical skills only, but also on the image of our practice. We need to be aware of the image our practice conveys and not only focus on what we see through our microscopes!

Another real strength of this congress was the opportunity to meet the suppliers and manufacturers in the exhibition hall. Attendees were able to check out the latest in microscope technology, as well as instrumentation and imaging. The industry sponsors, such as Sigma Dental Systems, Global Surgical, DENTSPLY Maillefer, EMS and Nobel Biocare, who help make these meetings possible, must also be recognised.

The social programme was very well organised, with a welcome reception at the National Gallery of Art and a gala dinner at the Vilnius Town Hall the following evening. Vilnius is a most interesting place to visit—



a mix of the very old and the very new and an awareness of the really quite recent changes in Lithuania's political climate.

The venue, the Radisson Blu Hotel Lietuva overlooking the Neris river, was just a short walk from the ancient town centre of Vilnius, making it well located and attractive at the same time, with great views over Vilnius and good ambience and customer service overall.

Microscope-using dentists might be seen as a special 'breed', a rather elitist self-selecting group. In my opinion, microscope-using dentists are concerned dental clinicians, following a logical progression of endeavour that modern technology allows. Additionally, they are knowledgeable, open to sharing their experiences and a wonderful group of people to be around. This congress was a great opportunity to gain exposure in this regard and my heart-felt congratulations go to the organisers. I look forward to the 2012 Berlin meeting. _

