The German Society of Nephrology

According to medical council statistics, there are currently 2,378 active nephrologists in Germany. The German Society of Nephrology (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nephrologie – DGfN) has 2,250 members at present, 2,109 of whom are domiciled in Germany. Based on the number of members who are normally resident in Germany, this means that about 89% of all nephrologists in Germany are members of the DGfN.

The DGfN maintains loose contact with other nephrology societies in Europe – but there are no agreements on systematic collaboration or affiliation. Joint German-Israeli meetings during recent conferences are already a tradition, however.

Each year, the DGfN awards prizes and scholarships in support of nephrology. Some of these prizes are for research achievements in nephrology, while others foster young talents (research and dissertations). Research scholarships, each worth € 25,000, support current research projects. Research scholarships are also awarded by the German Renal Foundation (Deutsche Nierenstiftung), with which the DGfN works closely. The poster prizes and travel grants awarded at annual conferences are specifically aimed at supporting the new generation of nephrologists.

The aforementioned German Renal Foundation is primarily concerned with informing patients and also with giving material support to kidney patients in difficult social circumstances. In contrast, the Kidney Academy within the DGfN concentrates on further and continuing training of nephrologists in Germany.

The outbreak of EHEC-HUS in Germany prompted the DGfN to create a register of patients with the illness, and the recorded data and blood samples have been made available for research analysis. The DGfN also provides expertise and financial support to a new peritoneal dialysis register currently being created, and to efficient use of the DRG classification system in the field of nephrology.

In order to safeguard a high level of quality in the treatment and management of patients, the DGfN has begun to certify hospitals that specialise in nephrology.

A patient information system based on a series of films addressing particular topics is being developed by the DGfN in an effort to enhance patient education. A smartphone-optimised app is also being written to provide information about international studies of current importance.

At our 2012 Annual Conference in Hamburg, a series of meetings specially for young nephrologists will be held; this year, for the first time, the Executive Board of the DGfN met with young doctors to foster interest in specialist training in nephrology and/or to encourage them in their choice of profession.