

Annual report 2008 of the Working group for “Echocardiography and Cardiac Imaging” of the Swiss Society of Cardiology

Manfred Ritter

Board members: Manfred Ritter (president), Jean Bérubé (vice-president), Cédric Vuille (past-president), Patrick Hunziker (secretary), Xavier Jeanrenaud (treasurer), Christian Seiler (councillor)

Activity of the working group

As in the years before 2008 again has seen numerous activities of our working group in various fields comprising educational goals as much as the ongoing struggle for quality maintenance especially in the context of clinical echocardiography.

Continuous medical education has been provided by the traditional and always well attended meetings of Lucerne, the Mayo Clinic Meeting of Prof. Attenhofer in Zurich, the Euro-Heart Imaging in Basel and the Journée Romande d'échocardiographie held this year in Geneva. Efforts towards new frontiers have been made by the Lausanne group focussing with their newly created meeting exclusively on 3D echo last fall. Collaboration with the anaesthesiologists was intensified participating in their educational course on intra-operative transoesophageal echocardiography in Sigriswil in early December 2008. Finally, the Scientific Session of our working group during the annual meeting of the Swiss Society of Cardiology in Berne was shared with the cere-

brovascular working group of Switzerland and dealt with cardiovascular imaging after stroke.

Communication among our now approximately 150 members is based on the News Letter established since 2007 and our website www.swissecho.ch. The list of active members within the field of echocardiography has been updated and may be looked up in the member section of our website. Evaluation of member activities within imaging modalities other than echocardiography yielded a still small number of colleagues involved in cardiac CT (3%) or cardiac MRI (8%). Hence, further applications of colleagues dealing with these fields of non invasive imaging are mandatory and, therefore, warmly welcomed.

Facing an increasing pressure and request from non cardiologists to obtain a “licence of competence” to perform “quick-look” and “goal-oriented” echo studies the most important political step in 2008 consisted in the creation of a position paper of our working group and the Swiss Society of Cardiology that clearly defines the frame for high quality echocardiography studies. These “Recommendations for quality maintenance in echocardiography” were published in “Kardiovaskuläre Medizin” in January 2009:11(1);22–3. (website: www.kardio.ch/pdf/2009/2009-01/2009-01-072.PDF). The accompanying editorial nicely points out the at least twofold danger that goes along with a



Dr. Manfred Ritter,
president of the working group.

degradation of the high standards achieved in echocardiography: a loss of diagnostic power for the concerned patients and an increase in health care costs by unnecessary redo exams.

Finally, to give way to such a “licence” would, last but not least, dilute the reimbursement as well – for sure!

Contact:

Dr. med. Manfred Ritter
HerzZentrum Hirslanden
Witellikerstrasse 36
CH-8008 Zürich
ritter@herzzentrum.ch