

WELCOME ADDRESS

Dear colleagues, members of the German Transplantation Society (DTG) and guests of our annual meeting,

It is our greatest pleasure to welcome you to the 27th annual meeting of the DTG in former East Berlin.

For us Bavarian transplant physicians from Regensburg and transplant surgeons from Munich it is a great honor and challenge to be able to organize and chair this scientific meeting in Germany's Capital. The congress center "Kosmos" on Karl-Marx-Allee offers us an ideally tailored ambience. Once having been the biggest cinema of the former German Democratic Republic, it has been refurbished to a multiplex cinema and offers a number of advantages: on one hand, the conference rooms are ideal in size and comfort: the centrally located large oval space is predestined for the industrial exhibition, being radially surrounded by the meeting rooms, hosting the scientific part of our conference. On the other hand, the subway station is located almost "at the front door" only three steps away from Alexanderplatz, where you can find the first line selected hotels for our congress, like the Park-Inn, as well as the rotating restaurant on top of the Berlin television tower, where our festive evening gala will take place, on Friday, November 9th, 2018.

Not far from our conference center, at the Department of Urology of the Municipal Hospital of Berlin-Friedrichshain, on February 13th, 1967, the first successful kidney transplant was performed by Moritz Mebel, the "nestor" of east German kidney transplantation, approximately three years after the first successful event in Berlin's west. Under the later guidance of G. May, along with Hannover and Munich, the renal transplant program was among the three largest in Germany. In 1978, the Humboldt-University appointed Helmut Wolff Chairman of the Department of Surgery at the world famous Charité Hospital. In 1977, he had succeeded with the first liver transplantation in the east block and in 1986, with the first heart transplantation in the GDR. Additionally, pancreas and islet transplantation were part of his repertoire. Even a transplant law was existent in the former GDR since July 4th, 1975, having been deleted with the Unification Treaty in 1990, before on December 5th, 1997 the transplant law for the unified Germany came into effect.

In these early days of transplantation, the specter of problems was diametrically different from today's. While then, only few patients survived a solid organ

transplantation, today, we recognize one- (five-) year survival rates of more than 90 (70) %. However, this medical success story is limited by other factors: the striking lack of organ donors has increased the discrepancy between organ availability and need, significantly. Waiting times of sometimes above 10 years for dialysis patients as well as death on the waiting list are increasing phenomena that have reached an unbearable level. The more, we are extremely glad, that this topic has been recognized by politics and important measures for improving the organ donation situation in the hospitals have been initiated; even taboos like the presumed consent discussion are being considered anew.

Thus, in this year's conference, already the opening session starts with an analysis and inventory of the current state of transplantation medicine, trying to improve the seemingly insolvable problem with respect to chances and improvements. The resulting question, how to bring organ donation forward will be discussed in the first plenary session on Friday, November 9th. On one hand, our focus is directed to Catalonia, the world champion in organ donation, on the other hand to the DSO and its initiative plan for organ donation and finally to a model for early public relations, already in schools.

Consequently, in the light of the dilemma in organ donation, the arising question for alternative solutions is dealt with in our final plenary session; the current state of Xenotransplantation, as well as models for heart and islets are discussed, as "emergency exits" from the crisis.

Rules and evidences for a just organ allocation form another focus of our meeting: clinical, legal and ethical aspects in the frequently incompatible aspects of urgency and prospect of success are discussed intensively in our second plenary session. Outcomes, structural and procedural quality in organ transplantation are increasingly important and form a challenge we are going to face.

Furthermore, the aspect of continuing education is a central element of our scientific program: in our so-called "Master Classes", e.g. the topic of Innate Immunity with its importance far beyond transplantation medicine, allows new insights for the participants. In a "hands-on" workshop how to use the Lung Allocation Score (LAS), also practical aspects are respected. "Pushing the limit" – with this slogan we focus on novel technologies like biomarkers, robotic surgery and machine perfusion as well as actual projects with public funding. Increase of the donor pool, dealing with highly immunized patients, but also necessary reports on

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actual changes in transplant guidelines carry a high informative potential.

With all these highly actual and labor-intensive topics, there will still be enough time for a sociable get-together and networking. The gala evening in the highest restaurant of Berlin, in the television tower at the Alexanderplatz will only be one opportunity.

We are looking forward to welcome you to the 27th annual meeting of the DTG and expect – together with you – a fruitful and hopefully informative, interesting and rewarding congress in Berlin.

In the name of the organization committee and the board of the DTG

Team Regensburg

Prof. Dr. Bernhard Banas, Conference President

PD Dr. med. Miriam Banas, Scientific Secretary

PD Dr. med. Tobias Bergler, Scientific Secretary

Team Munich

PD Dr. med. Helmut Arbogast, Conference President

PD Dr. med. Michael Thomas, Scientific Secretary

Dr. med. Dionysios Koliogiannis, Scientific Secretary