

MEDIA RELEASE

DOG 2019

September 26th through 29th 2019 at the Estrel Berlin

“We need research to shape our future”

Conference of the German Ophthalmology Society with record participation

Berlin – Artificial intelligence (AI), data registries and enhanced knowledge transfer between clinical ophthalmologists and basic researchers will continue to improve ophthalmological healthcare. With this key conclusion ended the latest edition of the DOG Conference 2019, “Ophthalmology: Our Field and Its Future”, on Sunday in Berlin. Over 5.100 visitors attended the conference at the Estrel Hotel, including 3.169 expert participants – a record for the DOG, at the age of 162 years the oldest ophthalmological society in the world. “The increase in expert visitors is proof that our strategy of continued evolution for the Conference and its formats is successful,” says DOG President Professor Claus Cursiefen. Event highlights included not only the keynote lectures but also the new formats “Highlights in Translational Science” and “DOG International Experts Day”.

Highlights in Translational Science brought together clinical and basic researchers – clinical ophthalmologists learned more about the latest research insights soon to be applicable in therapies while researchers gained a deeper understanding of current treatments and need for improvements. “It was a very productive dialogue,” Professor Cursiefen says. As a day-long program in English that included sessions with top experts from various countries, the DOG International Experts Day provided a forum for international exchange. “Problems arising in treatments need to be addressed by translational research approaches. They are only solvable with interdisciplinary and international collaboration,” Cursiefen says. “We need research to shape our future.”

The keynote lectures by international experts underlined this approach. One of the event’s popular highlights was the keynote by Professor Dimitri Azar. The cornea specialist, since 2015 in leading positions at the former Google unit Verily and one of the most prominent advocates of AI applications for the human eye, spoke in front of a packed audience about innovations that will enable more effective and affordable, yet also more patient-focused ophthalmological care. This was preceded on Friday by the Albrecht von Graefe Lecture by Professor Michael Bach (Freiburg, Germany), who has developed a computer-based method to define visual acuity semi-automatically and according to DIN standards. The inaugural keynote lecture was presented on Thursday by Professor Jesper Hjortdal from Denmark. Hjortdal is the President of the European Society of Cornea and Ocular Surface Disease Specialists EUCORNEA and will report on the latest developments and studies in the field of keratoconus.

During the opening ceremony, Professor Pascale Ehrenfreund, CEO of the German Aerospace Center, talked about “Mission Mars: Cutting-Edge Research in Space”, thus adding a further aspect to the Conference’s motto “Our Field and Its Future”. As Pascale Ehrenfreund’s fascinating talk revealed, visual acuity is essential not only on Earth but also – and particularly – in space.

In total, the conference program included 1.200 research presentations; 281 sessions in 59 symposiums, 10 Updates, 23 free presentations, 41 courses, 38 poster sessions, 11 workshops, 3 keynote lectures and numerous working sessions. At the industrial exhibition *, 115 exhibitors presented their innovative products on 2,500 square meters of net floor space and held 25 company events.

The conference’s attractive supporting program* provided additional opportunities to connect and share insights. At the DOG in Concert benefit event, an orchestra of ophthalmologists played classical masterpieces at the Passionskirche in Berlin Kreuzberg. Proceeds of the concert went to the German Eye Foundation (Stiftung Auge). Also in support of the German Eye Foundation, this year’s “Eye Run” set a new record with 99 participants.

Next year’s DOG conference will be held from October 8th through 11th at Estrel Berlin under the presidency of Professor Hans Hoerauf. The director of the Göttingen University Eye Clinic will focus the event on the 150th anniversary of DOG founder Albrecht von Graefe. For the first time, the DOG congress will be held as a joint meeting with the International Society of Ocular Trauma (ISOT). As another premiere, the European Board of Ophthalmology (EBO) will hold their fall examinations during the DOG Conference. In addition to research innovation, diagnostics and therapy, the DOG 2020 will focus on topics relating to the effects of economization on medicine in general and ophthalmology in particular.

At the DOG 2019, members also elected some new members of the DOG Presidium. First Vice President and, thus, president in 2021 will be Professor Hagen Thieme, Director of the University Eye Clinic Magdeburg. Professor Claus Cursiefen, Director of the University Eye Clinic Köln, completed his term as president and is now Second Vice President.

New and returning members of the DOG Presidium are Professor Nikolaos Bechrakis (Essen), PD. Dr. Katrin Lorenz (Mainz), Professor Lars-Olof Hattenbach (Ludwigshafen) and Professor Bernd Bertram (Aachen).

* The industrial exhibition and the fee-based supporting program are not DOG e.V. events but events of Interplan Congress, Meeting & Event Management AG Munich.

File copy requested.

DOG: research – science – patient care

DOG is the medical science association of ophthalmologists in Germany. More than 7.750 doctors, researchers, and scientists in the field of ophthalmology are members. The key mission of the DOG is to promote ophthalmological research. The organization supports scientific projects and research studies, organizes conferences, and publishes scientific journals. DOG also supports and promotes young scientists and researchers, e.g. by offering stipends. Established 1857 in Heidelberg, DOG is the world’s oldest ophthalmological society and the oldest medical specialists’ association in Germany.