

Urology Training Programme Committee certifies outstanding training centres

Interview with Professor Hans-Peter Schmid

In 1990, the members of the UEMS (Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes) Section of Urology set up the European Board of Urology (EBU). The EBU is charged with rendering optimal urological service to the public of Europe. The day-to-day work of the EBU is commissioned to its four committees: the Examination Committee, the Accreditation Committee, the Manpower Committee and the Urological Training Programme Committee (UTPC), formerly called the Residency Review Committee (RRC).

Hans-Peter Schmid, Professor of urology and Chairman at the St. Gallen hospital (CH), was asked by the Swiss Society of Urology to represent his country in the EBU. He is a member of the UTP Committee since 2005. He was trained in urology in Switzerland and worked for several years in the United States (Stanford University), France (CHU Bichat, Paris) and Germany (University of Münster). Below you will find a summary of the interesting interview we had with him recently.

What are the goals of the UTPC?

Hans-Peter Schmid: "The organisation, implementation and promotion of training programmes in the entire urological field. We aim to set high educational standards throughout Europe. When the UTPC decides to grant an EBU certificate to a training centre, it means that the centre fulfils stringent criteria. Only then is it a meaningful tool, not only for urology as a medical speciality, but also for the general population since they benefit from well-trained doctors. We are very happy to have a representative of the European Society of Residents in Urology (ESRU) in our committee, since residents constitute an important part of our target group".

What are the benefits of certification for an institute and for the residents?

Schmid: "There are numerous benefits. To name but a few: an EBU certification is a 'Mark of Excellence' and a sign of quality control. While going through the EBU certification process, a training centre is given an opportunity for self-reflection: how should the institute be organised? How can education be structured? Moreover, an EBU Certified Training Centre attracts many people. For example, our EBU certified department receives a great deal of applications from residents who are keen to work for us. They come from Germany, Austria, etc. It is easier for them to apply at certified centres, because these facilitate the

exchange of residents between European institutes. Thus, residents find out which centres are certified on the Internet and then make their choice. Our hospital selects the best residents who are invited to come and work for us for a maximum of four years. We only have room for 10% of the total number of applicants." The advantage for the resident is that he or she is offered a structured, high-level education every year. Another benefit is that a certified department is able to maintain a better position in the hospital compared to other departments."

EBU certification: Mark Of Excellence

How do the application and certification procedures work?

Schmid: "Every European urology department can apply. Obviously the residency training programme must meet the national standards as defined by the national society. The application form can easily be downloaded from the EBU website, www.ebu.com. The applying centre is to complete and return the form to the EBU office. The UTPC discusses the application and if the committee is of the opinion that the centre fulfils the criteria for certification, two of our members perform a one-day site visit. We check the institute's training programme, operation procedures and facilities and talk to members of staff and residents. We offer new input, feed-back and advice on how some things can be improved and we emphasise the good things. The centre is evaluated against the UTPC standards, since the national standards in Europe are quite heterogeneous. After approval, the centre will receive the EBU Certified Training Centre certificate".

What is your motivation to be a UTPC delegate and what was your experience so far?

Schmid: "I have always considered it a challenge and a privilege to train young urologists. Furthermore I wish to contribute to the strengthening of European urology.

As a UTPC delegate, I regularly perform site visits. My experience is that it gives you insight into other medical departments. I can see how they work and I profit from new ideas that I can incorporate in my own department in St. Gallen. I learn a lot from this work.

I think the EBU certification is one of the few truly European initiatives in this respect. This is proven by the fact that, in Switzerland, four of the six centres of education are EBU-certified. And the majority of Swiss urologists are a **Fellow of the European Board**

of Urology (FEBU), another *Mark of Excellence*, which means they have successfully passed the EBU Examinations in Urology. There is very strong support for the concept of European urology in Switzerland despite the fact that we are not a member of the EU.

The committee recently introduced a new score system. Could you clarify on that, what are the effects?

Schmid: "In the past, training centres had to fulfil the criteria, were visited and, if approved, they were all certified for five years independent of their quality. The new scoring system is more objective and ranks the institutes according to their educational quality. Moreover, a high score guarantees certification for five years whereas a lower score means that certification is granted for only three or four years, which is only fair. I would like to point out that certified centres with a lower score obviously do still meet the high standards".

How many institutes are certified today?

Schmid: "33 Centres are EBU-certified, 21 centres are in the process of re-certification. Nine new applications are being processed; two of these came from by prestigious centres outside of Europe, one in North Africa and one in South Asia. Of course, the UTPC is quite excited about this, because it is a sign that the EBU certification is also acknowledged and appreciated outside Europe. The committee is still discussing a policy on handling application requests from centres outside Europe".

Why was the name 'Residency Review Committee' recently changed into 'Urological Training Programme Committee'?

"We are no longer merely organising educational activities for residents. We are also involved in educational activities for consultants (non-resident urologists, e.g. staff members, Assistant Professors etc) and post-graduate activities. This means our committee now has a broader scope, which had to be reflected in the name".

Residents keen to be trained at EBU Certified Training Centres

What is the policy concerning the certification of sub-specialities?

Schmid: "Nowadays many institutions offer fellowship programmes for sub-speciality training. However, there is no quality control yet. It takes a lot of energy, planning and economical support to follow post-



Prof. Hans-Peter Schmid
Professor of urology and
Chairman at the St. Gallen
hospital (CH)

graduate training for a longer period of time (3-12 months). Many of the participating urologists/residents have family members that are also affected. Therefore it is of great importance that these participants are guaranteed a high standard so their investment is rewarded.

The UTPC has defined standards for the accreditation of sub-specialty centres of excellence. The criteria are tough and if an institution fulfils them, the highest quality is guaranteed. A sub-speciality may be female urology, laparoscopy, urological oncology, etc. The exact definitions of sub-specialities still need to be determined by the EBU in consultation with the Executive Committee of the EAU".

Members of the EBU Urological Training Programme Committee

Marianne Brehmer – Sweden
Joaquin Carballido – Spain
David Castro-Diaz – Spain
Piotr Chlosta – Poland
Stina Erikson (ESRU representative) – Sweden
Artur Gomez de Olivera – Portugal
Marcel Gunst – Switzerland
Georg Ludvik (Treasurer) – Austria
Helmut Madersbacher – Austria
Dimiter Mladenov – Bulgaria
Peter Mogensen (Chairman) – Denmark
Emanuele Montanari – Italy
Hans-Peter Schmid – Switzerland
Zaza Tchanturuaia – Georgia
Sedat Tellaloglu (Expert) – Turkey
Hein Van Poppel – Belgium

For more information:

EBU office
P.O. Box 30016
6803 AA Arnhem
The Netherlands
T: +31 26 389 08 46
F: +31 26 389 08 48
E: ebu@ebu.com
W: www.ebu.com