

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Oral medicine in German-speaking countries

The authors of the article 'An international survey in postgraduate training in Oral Medicine' (Rogers *et al*, 2011) have to be applauded for their study and recommendations for an international core curriculum in Oral Medicine. We feel – as the addressed 'representatives' of Oral Medicine in our countries – that there is a growing need to implement this specialty globally. Not all the medical problems of a particular patient can be covered by the dentist, nor can his/her dental needs be taken care of by a physician. This may lead to unnecessary suffering for patients, to frustration of the treating doctors, and to an (avoidable) increase in the costs of health care. Because of the rapid progress in both medicine and dentistry and of the growing percentage of senior citizens in many countries, adequate diagnosis and treatment of oral diseases will become even more complex in the future.

We had answered the survey pointing out that Oral Medicine is neither a recognized specialty nor a distinct field of study in Germany, Austria, or Switzerland. We had hoped that the situation in our countries would be published in this survey, allowing us to demonstrate this deplorable deficit to our health care politicians and university leaders. Unfortunately, a short paragraph or a table mentioning all countries (including Germany, Austria, or Switzerland) addressed in the survey where

Oral Medicine does not exist as a distinct specialty is not present in the article. We would welcome any future article, editorial or comment in a prestigious journal such as *Oral Diseases* stressing the need for postgraduate training in this field in countries where Oral Medicine is not implemented as a proper field of specialization. Sometimes politicians need pressure from the scientific field to find solutions to existing problems in health care.

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Reference

Rogers H, Sollecito TP, Felix DH *et al* (2011). An international survey in postgraduate training in oral medicine. *Oral Dis* 17(Suppl I): 95–98.

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