

Editorial

The Second European Symposium on Stone Disease, Basle, 22–24 March 1990

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The Second European Symposium on Stone Disease took place in Basle, Switzerland, 22–24 March 1990.

These symposia started some 20 years ago as informal meetings founded by Winfried Vahlensieck, Bonn, and Georg Gasser, Vienna, since then, they have become a European institution. The third symposium will take place in 1991 in Madrid 14–16 March; it is being organized by Professor L. Cifuentes Delatte, Professor Aurelio Rapado and Professor Franco Linari.

Sadly enough, Georg Gasser will no more be with us, as he passed away after a short illness a few days before the meeting this year. All of us who have had the pleasure of being in contact with him will remember him fondly.

The development of extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy and of sophisticated percutaneous and endourological techniques have revolutionized stone treatment. However, lithotriptors are still expensive and endourology and percutaneous procedures have their problems and complications.

The limitations, costs and side effects of stone removal were therefore a main topic at this symposium and were addressed in a number of "state of the art" lectures. The organizers have decided to publish a selection of them in the interests of continuing education for interested urologists and nephrologists.

The theoretical basis for energy generation and transmission to the stone was given by J. L. Boulnois (Paris). J. Rassweiler (Mannheim) presented an overview on the different types of machines available now and on the clinical experience gained by using them. The problems related to endourology and laser lithotripsy were discussed by M. Marberger (Vienne) and R. Hartung (Munich), respectively. D. Hauri (Zürich) discussed the indications for open surgery, which are nowadays rare.

Concomitant with the enthusiasm for new techniques, interest in stone research and metaphylaxis has decreased. Laboratories that a few years ago were at the forefront of research have been closed or have directed their work at other topics. However, without prophylactic measures stones can recur in the long term in about 90% [1]. Reports in the literature indicate a higher recurrence rate after shock-wave lithotripsy [3] and an increasing incidence of patients having disintegrated stone fragments in their pyelo calical system [2]. The observation time is still too short to answer definitively the important question of whether repeated shock-wave application damages the

kidneys and provokes hypertension. A treatment limited to stone removal only copes with a symptom and overlooks the causes of stone disease, which is still poorly understood. Reappraisal of the role of metaphylaxis in light of modern therapies was therefore a second topic of the Basle Stone Symposium.

The different techniques of stone analysis as the basis of rational metaphylaxis were examined in a critical manner by R. Asper (Zürich). The epidemiological studies of W. G. Robertson (Riyadh) pointed out the role of diet and especially of excessive protein intake in stone pathogenesis. The metabolic and physiochemical aspects of calcium stone disease were presented by P. Jaeger (Bern) and J. M. Bauman (Biel). F. Hering (Basle), D. Ackermann and B. Hess (Bern) discussed the different approaches to investigate and treat stone disposing disturbances.

Acknowledgements. Publication of this supplement was made possible by the help of the Swiss Society of Urology and the scientific fund of the Department of Urology, Basle.

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