Update from the Honorary Secretary

When I studied medicine, I never thought that I would ever become a headache specialist and a headache researcher. It happened by chance in 1994 that the Headache Clinic in our Department needed a new Director and nobody but me was interested. Since then, I have been working in this field and I am still surprised by how fascinating it is. Headache medicine is both basic neuroscience and helping patients successfully, in most cases. You cannot say this for many other fields in neurology.

Over the years I have worked as President of the German Migraine and Headache Society from 2004 to 2007, and as Chair of the Headache Panel of the European Federation of Neurological Societies. This work gave me much insight into politics and into different organisations. There were two major programmes I tried to build up. First, evidence-based guidelines on all aspects of headache treatment were developed, and now in Europe guidelines for all major headache disorders are published. Secondly, young colleagues interested in research or clinical work in headache were invited to join a group, which meets regularly. They discuss their research projects and interesting headache cases in a self-organised way.

Based on this experience I was happy to take over the position as Honorary Secretary of the IHS from Judith Lutz-Burns in June 2011. As Secretary, it is my job to deal with the ‘daily business’ of our society. This means a lot of email conversation all over the world, and discussion of new projects in close cooperation with our President and with Carol Taylor, the Society’s Administrative Manager. So, any questions or ideas can be forwarded to me (email: everss@uni-muenster.de), and I will be happy to help.

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Building a bridge towards the headache community

In 2010 I was asked to join the IHS Board of Trustees as past Chairman of the Trainees and Residents Subcommittee and current Chairman of the Education subcommittee. Building a bridge towards the young headache doctors and trying to provide up-to-date education to the headache community. Headache disorders such as migraine and tension type headache are underestimated from a clinical, scientific and educational point of view.

One of the aims of the International Headache Society is to improve headache education worldwide. The recently published ‘Atlas of headache disorders and resources in the world 2011’ shows that the level of headache care has improved quite substantially, but there is still little attention for headache education in many parts of the world. IHS spends more than US$150,000 every year trying to fill in the gaps where possible.

At the moment the IHS is actively building an online headache library and has several educational programmes. The online learning centre can be found on the IHS website and contains educational material such as book chapters, slide series and congress posters. Educational programmes are continuously provided, including the ‘online case discussions’, the ‘headache master school’ and ‘visiting professors’. And finally, to set a standard for headache education, the IHS has created a core curriculum for headache, which will be published soon.

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