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Emergency Medicine in Switzerland 2003

The dominant topic was the general ambition to create manageable structures and clear competencies in Swiss emergency medicine. At the rescue forum in Lugano this necessity was made explicit and the presidents and board members of numerous organizations were charged with harmonizing structures, training, interest groups and the representation of objectives.

SMEDREC (The Swiss Medical Rescue and Emergency Conference) could be serving as the top instance for coordinating tasks, whereas SGNOR (Swiss Society for Emergency Medicine and Rescue) and the VRS (Association of Swiss Paramedics) could take the role of coordinating emergency physicians and paramedics. Commissioned by bodies such as the cantons or the SMEDREC, the IVR (Association for Rescue Services) is responsible for certifying the quality of operations. The SRC (Swiss Resuscitation Council) promotes and regulates the spread of harmonized resuscitation guidelines, which comply with the international standards of ILCOR (International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation).

The new project “Swiss Integrated Academy for Military and Disaster Medicine”(SAMK) is a joint initiative of five medical schools in Basel (anaesthesia and resuscitation), Bern (internal medicine and infectiology), Geneva (surgery), Lausanne (disaster medicine) and Zurich (military psychiatry). The project provides training for senior physicians in the respective specialized areas of the competence centers. Moreover courses in specialized fields are being organized and specialist personnel provide training and are ready to participate in international civil operations.

At the same time “CEFOCA” (Centre de Formation en Médecine Militaire et de Catastrophe) was established in Lausanne, an institute that, in collaboration with SAMK, the Coordinated Medical Service and SGNOR, aims at structuring and improving the medical management of major crises. The first courses of this module-based program are already being held. A working group is currently setting up a curriculum of joint courses for medical and paramedical cadres for civil emergencies (not disasters) with several injured persons.

Within a commission of the SGNOR the heads of emergency wards of different hospital categories are trying to improve the structures and the training conditions for Swiss emergency wards.

SGNOR worked out a program of further training for emergency physicians, whose license expires after five years. The program will serve as a basis for the new issuing of such certificates.

The courses in emergency medicine offered by SGNOR and the “Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Chirurgie” (Swiss Society for Surgery) are attracting ever more interest and participants from Switzerland and abroad. In 2002 eight courses in emergency medicine, 16 ACLS courses, 6 PALS courses and 18 ATLS courses took place throughout Switzerland. At the same time new instructors for the respective courses are being trained in additional teacher-training courses.