Editorial—Neurowoche 2010: A Highlight of Neuromedicine in Germany

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Medicine, the science and art of healing, does not progress without specialization. Medical specialties developed traditionally as Medical, Surgical and later as Diagnostic specialties. With increased experience and knowledge in anatomy, pathology, aetiology and pathophysiology of diseases, physicians started to specialize in groups of diseases that affect distinct organ systems. Moritz Heinrich Romberg (1795–1873), a Jewish physician from Berlin, Germany, and widely known for his test of sensory ataxia, was the first who published a German textbook on Neurology and is regarded as the founder of Clinical Neurology. It took then about 50 years before the first departments of Neurology separated from Internal Medicine. Neurologists became accurate observers of the signs and symptoms of neurological diseases. They had to wait 70 years before they were able to directly visualize and examine the central nervous system.

1905, a few years after the detection of x-rays, Arthur Schüller published a book on radiographics of the skull base and coined the term “Neuro-Radiology (Neuro-Röntgenologie)” in Vienna, one year before the Neurologist Wilhelm Fürnrohr published the first German textbook on Neuroradiology, “Röntgenstrahlen im Dienste der Neurologie” (X-rays serving Neurology).

Since then the field of Neuromedicine—exploring the function and dysfunction of the central, peripheral, and autonomic nervous system—attracted scientists and physicians, who further specialized in Neurosurgery and Neuropathology, Pediatric and Geriatric Neurology, movement disorders, degenerative diseases, oncology, muscular disor-

ders, neuroinflammation, neurotrauma, neurodevelopmental diseases, clinical neurophysiology, pain and sleep medicine, cognitive and vascular neurology. All these sub-specialties learned the advantages of neuroimaging. Neurologist and Neurosurgeons specialized in Neuroradiology and developed methods to visualize and approach brain and spine supplying vessels and cerebro-spinal fluid spaces. Finally physicists and computer technology together with Radiologists enabled the imaging of the anatomy, pathology, and function of brain and spinal cord tissue and vasculature with computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging.

No doubt, all these efforts enabled effective prophylaxis and treatment of disastrous diseases like syphilis and tuberculous meningitis, polio, and more recently stroke and multiple sclerosis, and contributed to better life quality and prolonged life expectancy in addition to deeper insights into nervous function.

Specialization, however, means separation. Specialists may be so fascinated from their own fields that they miss important developments in related specialties, chances for cooperation, and improved patient care. Moreover, it may happen that ambition and competition among specialists give rise to rivalry and struggle for resources. Moreover, patients may become confused by the offer of different specialists to treat their diseases, e.g. a stenosis of the carotid artery.

To overcome the potential disadvantages of specialization within Neuromedicine, a working group of clinical neuroscientists coordinated by Professor Werner Hacke and supported by the German Societies of Neurology, Neurosurgery, Neuroradiology, Neuroanatomy and Neuropathology, and Neuropediatrics has developed the concept of the *Neurowoche*, a congress combining the experience and knowledge of all these scientific societies. After 4 years, this congress takes place again in Mannheim, Germany, in Sep-

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tember 21 to 25, 2010. The participants will have a unique opportunity getting informed about the latest developments and scientific efforts of all these specialities and communicating about common guidelines, quality control, and possibilities of research cooperation.

Neuroradiologist should take advantage of this opportunity and show their reliable capability to contribute to the whole field of Neuromedicine from scientific molecular

imaging over the entire field of clinical diagnostics to techniques of intervention in emergencies like ischaemic and haemorrhagic stroke.

Please, join this year the German Society of Neuroradiology (DGNR) in Mannheim.

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