The German Cardiac Society welcomes ESC in Munich

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After many years, the ESC is back in Munich for its annual congress. The German Cardiac Society (DGK) welcomes the attendees and takes this opportunity to present a current overview of key issues in cardiovascular medicine and research, and to demonstrate in which fields that German scientific facilities have made relevant contributions to development and/or progress.

Based on specific restricted funding conditions, a cooperative scientific network leads to genuine focused international contributions to basic science and progress in diagnostics and therapy for the major cardiovascular diseases. These activities have implications for healthcare financing, health planning, and life expectancy.

The diagnostic and therapeutic advances in modern cardiovascular medicine play an instrumental part in the continued rise of life expectancy—also in Germany. Examples of these developments are our networks for myocardial infarction, which facilitate quick and competent treatment, as well as imaging innovations. Add to this the broad-based possibilities offered by heart catheter technology for re-opening constricted or closed blood vessels and keeping them open, for surgically removing body tissues in the case of cardiac

arrhythmias, and for implanting stents, heart valves, and certain types of pacemakers. In Germany, minimally invasive innovations of these kinds benefit old people for whom the conventional heart surgery can pose a high risk and increasingly also younger people—for instance, in the case of transcatheter aortic valve implantation (TAVI). The Heart Team plays a vital role in Germany in this context. Its objective is to ensure the best possible individualized treatment.

In addition, there have been advances in biomarkers, of which significant ones were developed in Germany, and in pharmacological treatments. Every year, the German “Heart Report” documents this development and these advances in cardiovascular medicine in Germany.

The intention of this special issue is to give cardiologists from other countries’ insights into the development of cardiology in the host country of this year’s ESC Congress. We are pleased and honored that so many colleagues have traveled to Munich to attend the ESC Congress.

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