The Swiss Society of Dermatology and Venereology

75th Annual Meeting: 80 Years of Activity

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The first independent Swiss University Departments for cutaneous and venereal diseases chaired by professors were created at the end of the last century in Geneva in 1887 (Hugues Oltramare), Lausanne in 1891 (Emile Dind) and Bern in 1892 (Edmund Lesser); Basel followed in 1913/14 (Bruno Bloch) and Zurich in 1916 (Bruno Bloch). In the first months of 1913, B. Bloch, E. Dind, Joseph Jadassohn (in Bern since 1896) and H. Oltramare invited Swiss physicians with a particular interest in cutaneous and venereal diseases to join them in order to form a society. The first meeting took place in Geneva on the 24th of April 1913, where 15 founding members from all parts of Switzerland were present (fig.1). The new Society was named Société Suisse de Dermatologie et de Syphiligraphie/Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Dermatologie und Syphilidologie and H. Oltramare became its first president. In 1917, the name was changed to Société Suisse de Dermatologie et de Véné-réologie (SSDV)/Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Dermatologie und Venereologie. The membership slowly increased during its early years of existence, with the SSDV admitting the first female dermatologist in 1916. In 1923, the Society counted 63 members, in 1943 a total of 96 members. During the last decades, a more pronounced increase in membership was registered. In 1993, the SSDV had 9 honorary members, 222 ordinary members, 34 extraordinary members and 30 emeritus members.

The main activity of the SSDV has been to organize annual meetings which were only interrupted for short periods during the two World Wars. These meetings have provided a forum to exchange information on new developments in Dermatology and Venereology and strengthen the ties of friendship between the members of the Swiss Dermatological Community. The habitual, two-day scientific sessions have usually been devoted to lectures given by invited Swiss or foreign Dermatologists, communications on current research in the five Swiss University Departments of Dermatology and to case presentations. The latter, often with short clinical reviews of the demonstrated disease, have always dominated the sessions. The vast majority of the SSDV meetings (all since 1948) have alternated between the five University Departments of Basel, Bern, Geneva, Lausanne and Zurich. From 1919, the scientific proceedings were published in summarized form by the Schweizerische Medizinische Wochenschrift and, beginning in 1940, they appeared in Dermatologica (Dermatology), which became the official organ of the SSDV in 1945.

Since 1946, the SSDV also holds a spring meeting as the annual meeting takes place in the autumn. The spring meetings are mostly organized by Dermatologists practicing in smaller cities in the different Cantons (States) of Switzerland, where practical aspects of Dermatology are usually addressed. They also include rich social programs accompanied by pleasant sight-seeing tours. Since 1971, the traditional spring meeting is held every other year and alternates with an

educational course providing reviews relating to progress in domains of importance for dermatologists in private practice.

In the thirties, the SSDV participated in elaborating the regulations established by the Medical Association of Switzerland, which defined the training needed to qualify as a specialist in Dermato-Venereology. In 1937, the SSDV

218 Frenk The Swiss Society of Dermatology and Venereology

Fig. 1. First meeting of the Swiss Society of Dermatology and Venereology, 24 April, 1913, in Geneva. Front row: Tièche, Narbel, Dind (1), Oltramare (2), Jadassohn (3), Helg; second/third row: Du Bois, Dösseker, Lassueur, Winkler, Antonietti, Guth, Bloch (4). Lcnnhof, Merian.

contributed to this program for Dermatology by initiating a compulsory course on X-rays and UV irradiation and their therapeutic applications. In 1987/89, the SSDV developed a formal postgraduate training program, approved by the Medical Association of Switzerland in 1990, which is a necessary requirement for obtaining the title of a qualified

Dermato-Venereologist. In future years, the SSDV will certainly become even more involved in training and continuing education, an important challenge the SSDV has to meet in order to maintain the high level of professional quality of its members.