Editorial

The present issue of *Folia Phoniatria et Logopaedica* is dedicated to the 73rd Congress of the ‘Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sprach- und Stimmheilkunde e.V.’ (DGSS, German Society of Speech, Language, and Voice Pathology). Though DGSS has a good reputation in German-speaking countries, it has not yet gained so much popularity outside Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Considering the broad scientific activities of the DGSS members, this lack of popularity seems to be a considerable disadvantage to us. Thus, let me briefly introduce the DGSS.

The DGSS was founded in 1925 and was one of the first medical scientific societies in the world focusing on communication disorders. The greatest names among continental European phoniatrians were engaged in the society that continuously grew over the years. Just to name a few, Max Nadoleczny, Hermann Gutzmann jun., Julius Berendes, Ernst Loebell, and Peter Biesalski were active members. From the beginning, personal membership was not restricted to physicians like phoniatrians, but also scientists and practitioners from the fields of psychology, logopedics, linguistics, education, music, and other disciplines were invited to join. Furthermore, many other societies sent ‘affiliated members’

into the board of the DGSS and thus helped to develop a really ‘interdisciplinary idea’. Meanwhile, the DGSS has changed into an international interdisciplinary society – but still kept its original medical focus. (For further information, please visit our internet homepage, <http://www.dgss-ev.org>.)

In 2003 the biennial congress of DGSS was held in Basel (Switzerland), for the first time ever outside of Germany. It was dedicated to the Swiss phoniatrian Richard Luchsinger (1900–1993), who founded this very journal in 1947 (together with M. Seeman and J. Tarneaud). He also published a famous textbook on speech, language, and voice pathology with several editions from 1949 to 1970 (together with Gottfried E. Arnold from Jackson, Miss., USA). This textbook became a scientific cornerstone for many disciplines working in the field of speech, language, and voice pathology.

As the main and truly interdisciplinary issue of the Congress, ‘Speech, Voice, and Emotion’ was chosen. State-of-the-art lectures on neurophysiology, evolution, child development, education, and training intervention were given by invited renowned scientists. These lectures served as the framework for many oral presentations giving insight into

new data on emotion and its role in communication. Respecting the seminar character of invited presentations, they were already published as an 'educational seminar on emotion' in the German-speaking journal *Sprache–Stimme–Gehör* (Thieme) in June 2003. Now I would like to express my gratitude to *Folia Phoniatri et Logopaedica* for publishing selected papers based on oral presentations. This will emphasize their high scientific value and may also draw attention to upcoming DGSS meetings in even more countries and scientific communities.

Raithel et al. studied the question whether healthy subjects identify emotional content by either prosodic cues or speech intonation contours. The results show that for elderly subjects it was much more difficult to identify emotional content compared to young subjects. Hielscher-Fastabend et al. found that stroke patients with right or left hemispheric lesions had similar problems identifying emotional content. This is contrary to the common assumption that an intact right hemisphere should facilitate identifying emotional cues. Scheiner et al. looked into preverbal emotional utterances of normal-hearing and profoundly hearing-impaired infants in the first 20 months of age. Except for crying and

babbling, auditory input was not essential for emotional preverbal utterances. Böhm analyzed the coherence of speech of 10- to 13-year-old boys living in divorced families in comparison with matched controls and found significant drawbacks for boys separated from one parent. These boys had much more incoherent speech (content matching to emotional expression) and inferior reflectivity and coping with emotional stress. Keilmann et al. examined parents' and professionals' overall satisfaction with speech-language therapy in children. Schuster et al. (*Folia Phoniatr Logop* 2003;55:211–219) found that the Voice Handicap Index, which was originally designed for functional or behavioral voice disorders, is also a valuable instrument for patients fitted with a tracheoesophageal valve after laryngectomy. The present paper continues the findings published in 2003.

I do hope that readers of this issue will be as fascinated as me by these new scientific results that give insight into aspects of communication disorders previously largely neglected.

Rainer Schönweiler
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Guest Editor