



IADT Life Member

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How I (re)discovered Dental Traumatology and succeeded to advocate for this discipline throughout my career

Like everywhere else, it is also the case in the professional world that personal encounters often provide the impetus to open up new areas of interest. In the mid-1980s – at that time I had already been working as a young dentist at the University Dental Hospital in Mainz/Germany for more than 10 years – I accepted an invitation from Professor Leif Tronstad to be a guest for a few weeks in the Endodontic Program at Penn University.

As luck would have it, precisely during my stay in Philadelphia, Dr. Jens Andreasen, whom I had not met before, gave a seminar on Dental Traumatology to the postgraduates there. And so, I learned that without my noticing it, a lot had happened in this discipline by systematic research work: There were scientifically sound recommendations, supported by numerous clinical cases, which explained my experiences with trauma cases being often frustrating and prompted me to adapt my treatment concept to the new findings.

A little later, an endodontic research project led to a cooperation with Martin Trope, professor at Temple University/ Philadelphia and subsequently at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where I met Dr. Asgeir Sigurdsson. Both were later to become presidents of the IADT. Therefore, I was fortunate to come into contact with outstanding representatives of the then newly established field of dental traumatology relatively early on in the course of my endodontologically oriented activities. For instance, I used the IADT congresses in Florence (1996) and Oslo (2000) to reactivate my personal contacts, and consequently became the first German, and for a few years, the only German member of the IADT with the membership number 08.

In 1989, I took over the chair of Conservative Dentistry at the University Hospital Tübingen and, among other things, directed the interest of my colleagues towards dental traumatology as an obviously emerging discipline. Among those who were spurred on by my enthusiasm for Dental Traumatology were two colleagues, who later became chair holders as well: Prof. Roland Weiger in Basel/Switzerland and Prof. Gabriel Krastl in Würzburg/Germany. They have set an example by founding Dental Trauma Centers, the first one in Basle, followed by the one in Würzburg. Together with their teams, they have provided numerous research contributions and developed one of the first TraumaApps (AcciDent) available in German, English and Spanish, which helps dental practitioners to adequately deal with dental trauma.

Thus, early on, together with others, they played a major role in establishing more and more dental trauma centers at German University Dental Schools and/ or in creating interdisciplinary structures that ensure adequate care, especially for complex forms of dental trauma.

In summary, I can say that I was lucky to learn relatively early on that something was happening in the field of dental traumatology. That fitted perfectly with my focus on conservative dentistry and my specializations in both periodontology and endodontology. And I felt compelled to contribute within the scope of my possibilities to ensure that Dental Traumatology as an interdisciplinary subject receives the attention it deserves, be it in teaching undergraduate students and dentists, in motivating my staff, as editor of a German-language journal of endodontology and in my long-standing involvement in the board of the European Society for Endodontology (ESE). This may be little compared to what internationally renowned colleagues have done in dental traumatology, yet it is something.