

## **EMERGENCY MEDICINE in Austria, status 2011/05**

In Austria, Emergency Medicine does not exist as specialty, sub-, or supra-specialty. Every physician is entitled to attend a one week course "Emergency Medicine", which is a diploma recognized by the Austrian Physician Chamber. This diploma entitles every physician to work as an "emergency physician" on physician staffed ambulances ("Notarzt").

In-hospital emergency medicine is separated into trauma and non-trauma emergency departments, the trauma emergency departments are run by trauma surgeons and anesthesiologists, the non-trauma emergency departments are run mostly by internists as part of the Department of Internal Medicine. The Department of Emergency Medicine at the Medical University Vienna is its own entity, run by internists, most of them with the subspecialty "intensive care".

In 2008, the Austrian Association of Emergency Medicine (AAEM) was founded with the aim to establish the specialty Emergency Medicine in Austria. Until 2011, 97 members joined the AAEM. Founding members of the AAEM had numerous informal meetings with the Austrian Physician Chamber and other associations and societies of other specialties to introduce the AAEM and the aims of the AAEM, and to get a feeling about how other societies and associations feel about Emergency Medicine as a specialty.

The feedback of other associations and societies was generally positive, the importance of pre-hospital as well as in-hospital Emergency Medicine was recognized, but most other societies and associations felt that Emergency Medicine does not need to form its own specialty, rather than a subspecialty for Internal Medicine, Surgery, Anesthesiology, and Trauma Surgery (which is a specialty on its own in Austria). The feedback of the Austrian Physician Chamber was that from political perspective, no more specialties are wanted, and Emergency Medicine can be covered by well-trained general practitioners.

In 2009, the AAEM conducted its first congress with approximately 200 participants. In that meeting, the importance of Emergency Medicine was discussed with members of the Austrian Physician Chamber. In 2010 the activities of the AAEM continued with many informal discussions with opinion leaders in Austrian medical politics to get the ground for Emergency Medicine as specialty in the future. After many discussions, the AAEM has the feeling that for the time being the time is not ready to push for a specialty Emergency Medicine in Austria, rather first establish a curriculum for a sub-specialty Emergency Medicine. Once the sub-specialty Emergency Medicine is established, another push could be started toward the specialty Emergency Medicine. In 2010, the AAEM organized the second annual congress, but had to cancel the meeting due to budget reasons.

In 2011, the third AAEM congress will take place 9.9.2011. At this meeting, again politicians and opinion leaders of other societies and associations will be invited to discuss the role of Emergency Medicine as specialty in the future.

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Wilhelm Behringer, Secretary Austrian Association of Emergency Medicine