

Final Release – Trade Press Version

MEDICA in “perfect health” and chock full of innovations

Excellent mood at world’s largest medical fair in Düsseldorf

Congress documents the status quo in diagnosis and therapy

The 34th MEDICA ended after four days in Düsseldorf on Saturday, 23 November 2002. In spite of the troubled economic mood, the world’s largest medical fair proved to be in perfect health. 132,600 trade visitors (last year: 127,500) came to the Rhine to discover the latest products, services and procedures for the full spectrum of inpatient and outpatient care. MEDICA was able to further expand on its leading position, notching the best results in event history. Nearly one in three visitors were from outside Germany, with a substantial number coming to the Rhine from the American continent and Asia.

“The industry has faced the challenges posed by healthcare policy and presented the global market with an incredible array of innovations to boost efficiency and quality in patient care. The mood among exhibiting companies was excellent,” says Horst Klosterkemper, managing director of Messe Düsseldorf, praising the vitality of the event’s 3,668 exhibitors from 65 countries.

Remarkable advances from nearly all sectors of the industry were on show in the 17 fully booked exhibition halls. Biomedicine took center stage in the laboratory equipment and diagnostics segment, featuring, for instance, “bio-chips”. They underscore the rapid progress made in the molecular medicine segment. In the laboratory, for example, they can quickly show if a patient has signs of a particular illness. Other chips reveal if, in the presence of certain cell types, typical treatment methods (such as chemotherapy) would be effective. “Bio-chips to combat cancer” was the theme of a popular MEDICA Congress event on the use of bio-chips for cancer diagnosis. Biomedical innovations also included groundbreaking blood tests that can speed up the diagnosis of a heart attack. They were developed according to recent findings that a particular protein is released into the blood when a person suffers an attack.

Quantum leap for telemedicine through broadband technology

Telemedicine is about to make a quantum leap in its development, as clearly demonstrated to MEDICA visitors at the information and communications technology segment. Among the features were the “Body Area Network” project supported by companies and research institutes. The BAN is a diagnostic device worn comfortably on the body. The clever touch: results can be sent to the patient’s physician, the hospital or medical center using a GRPS or UMTS mobile phone in a broadband network. Emergency medicine will particularly benefit, as the system can also support a mobile dedicated line between ambulance and emergency room.

Widely discussed software topics this year included solutions for handling the new DRG billing system in German hospitals and Windows-based computer systems for doctors’ surgeries. For many doctors, a wealth of new products are making the transition easier from the outdated DOS systems. Medical professionals who have decided to update their IT will be happy they did, once they experience the new options for process optimisation that extend through a “paperless practice”. Communications between physicians and clinics will be facilitated as well. User-friendly programs help create electronic patient files for secure e-mail transmission. Even large-byte x-ray images, as MEDICA proved, can be sent online without long download times, thanks to the compression software presented. When it comes to IT in hospitals, the trends shown at MEDICA boil down to this: no matter which ward the computer workstation is located at, the necessary patient information can

be accessed at all times. And everyone — from anesthesiologists to surgeons through cardiologists — will find the data they need, as prepared by a special software package. Patients profit, too, because the treatment process can proceed without delay.

Technological progress spells higher diagnostic accuracy

MEDICA's exhibitors of medical technology and electromedical equipment presented innovations that facilitate appropriate and timely treatment. The latest computer tomography systems can image even the smallest calcium deposits in the coronary arteries, ensuring an accurate diagnosis. The risk of a heart attack is thus detected earlier. Meanwhile, ultrasound devices proved that mobility and high-quality images are not mutually exclusive. A selection of portable devices offer the resolution normally only seen with stationary, "high-end" models.

Apart from high-tech solutions, MEDICA also introduced some "catchy", patient-friendly ideas. For instance, a special therapeutic bike that pivots in the center of the frame strengthens back muscles and increases coordination. And the "snore stopper" provides more peace and quiet. If a sensor picks up loud noise, it gently vibrates to make the "culprit" turn over and stop snoring.

Congress programme: afternoon symposia enjoy a successful premiere

The MEDICA Congress delivered a comprehensive continuing education programme and explored the scientific status quo in diagnosis and treatment, thanks to the afternoon symposia which debuted this year. Renowned experts from the respective area of expertise focused on cardiology, gastroenterology, metabolic disorders and current findings in cancer research. Visitors also thronged to the Biotech Life Science Forum in the wake of recent advances made in this segment. With regard to the Congress for Laboratory Medicine (19 – 20.11), Gerd Fischer, secretary general of MEDICA – Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Medizinischen Diagnostik e. V., also had news to report: "The German Society for Clinical Chemistry and the German Society for Laboratory Medicine announced their merger. The event also drew a large audience, with 500 visitors, and a high-calibre selection of speakers."

Some 2,000 congress participants from all segments of healthcare attended the 25th German Hospital Congress, bannered "Healthcare policy – should be versus as is". The spotlight was on aspects of the labour market and clinical human resources development.

ComPaMED, the international trade fair for suppliers to medical manufacturing, was held in tandem with MEDICA. In Hall 8.1, 175 exhibitors proved that progress in doctors' surgeries and hospitals often depends on the little details. Whether visitors were in search of ultra-fine sensors for surgical and diagnostic equipment or micro-motors for medical devices, ComPaMED had all the right solutions.

The next MEDICA will be held in Düsseldorf from 19 to 22 November, 2003 (ComPaMED ends on 21 November 2003). For current information, please go to: www.medica.de

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