

Eitel J. Vida, Executive Director of the International Prevention Organization, Brussels, Member of the Board of the GWO – Gesundheitswirtschaft Osthessen e.V. (a health management organization in East Hesse)

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Agenda/Prevention

Research focuses on the **smallest vessels**

Are the smallest vessels in the human body soon going to be receiving so much attention? Eitel J. Vida, Executive Director of the International Prevention Organization, is firmly convinced of it. In the interview, this prevention expert explains the potential consequences of new findings from health policy research.

ÄRZTE ZEITUNG: Mr. Vida, you have been working on issues related to the prevention of chronic diseases for years via the International Prevention Organization (IPO).

What made the IPO turn to the subject of microcirculation?

EITEL J. VIDA: The IPO actually declined at first to engage intensively with this topic, as the scientific aspect was lacking. Today, the picture is different. The subject of microvessels is increasingly being made a focus of research because microcirculation is obviously more important in the development of many diseases than it was thought for a long time. Above all, the pioneering company Bemer has invested a great deal in research, developed “physical vascular therapy” and advanced things considerably as a result. Professor Rainer-Christian Klopp’s Institute for Microcirculation in Berlin and the IMIN (International Microvascular Net) then established an international network of research approaches. Meanwhile, many institutions and organizations, including even the American Heart Association (AHA), are involved in this field of research on capillary dysfunction.

Do you see physical vascular therapy in more of a preventative setting or a curative setting?

You know, doctors are always situated between cures and secondary prevention. Excess weight, for example is a risk factor for high blood pressure or coronary heart disease well before reaching the obesity threshold. But when doctors offer nutritional advice to these patients, or when they recommend that they do more exercise or take manual therapy measures, these forms of prevention are generally not covered by health insurance. Ultimately what lies behind it is the fear in the system that the spiraling costs will overrun us if we pay for preventative measures without drawing any boundaries.

Is it not more advantageous to pay for preventative measures than to pay for therapy down the line?

Actually, the costs of the major widespread diseases such as coronary heart disease or stroke are rising at a frightening pace – at the beginning of this millennium they increased by ten percent within six to seven years for coronary heart disease for example, and by 30 percent in the same period for stroke. So we’re talking about billions.

...and what has this got to do with physical vascular therapy?

A great deal! Circulatory problems in the periphery play a key role in the development of diseases – we already know that much nowadays. Almost everything in the organism depends in some form or other on good circulation, and therefore ultimately on good microcirculation. 75 percent of the vessels in the body are microvessels while only 25 percent are large vessels such as veins and arteries. If you can have a positive effect on these vessels by means of physical vascular therapy, you are acting both curatively and preventatively at the same time because you are intervening as early as the development processes of diseases such as coronary heart disease, stroke or intestinal disorders.

Are the conventional therapeutic approaches not adequate?

One problem is that the small vessels have no receptors on which drugs can act. With physical vascular therapy, we seem to be obtaining better effects and we’re increasing oxygen uptake and the removal of substances – better than with drugs, which don’t make the grade here at all. And technologically, we can do a great deal more today than we could just 15 years ago. Now it’s a question of strengthening the evidence behind the findings. The more we know about the significance of microcirculation and about new approaches to diagnostics and to therapy, the more important good therapy becomes, including from an economic point of view, since the cost pressure is increasing, but the ability of the population to pay for services not covered by health insurance is not. There may eventually be an important dialogue on different reimbursement models – which would undoubtedly be helpful to many patients. (ger)

IMIN – International Microvascular Net

Modern medicine is increasingly recognizing the complex connections in the entire vascular system and focusing to an ever greater extent on the interactions between large vessels and microvessels in the peripheral circulation.

The organization IMIN (International Microvascular Net) based in Brussels and Loßburg has set itself the task of establishing an international network of existing knowledge on the subject and supporting researchers in defining new therapy standards.

At the Microvascular High Tech Solutions congress in Dresden on 17 September, organized by the Bemer Group in partnership with IMN participants are to be provided with an overview of the latest research on microcirculation and of new developments in physical diagnostic and therapy systems for use in practice. (eb)

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Further information and registration: www.imin-org.eu (Events)