

AUSTRIAN & GERMAN COURSES FOR MOUNTAIN MEDICINE

International Society for Mountain Medicine Newsletter, **10** (2): 11-13 (April 2000)

This draft presents the system for the post-graduate education of a mountain physician according to the „*international label*“ of MEDCOM UIAA, MEDCOM IKAR and ISMM. Herein are stated the aims and the program for the education required for optimum mountain medical training in combination with decisive climbing training as it has been established and developed by the Austrian Society for Mountain and Altitude Medicine (ÖGAHM) since 1992. Since 1998 we perform our courses together with the German Society for Mountain and Expedition Medicine (BEXMED).

Since 1992 we have performed 23 one-week-courses with altogether 845 participants.

Profile of participants 1992 - 1998

Total:

845 participants (418 persons)

Country of origin:

Austria	213 (51 %)
Germany	185 (44 %)
Switzerland	10
Italy	6
Netherlands	4

Status:

Physicians	409
Students	9

Sex:

Female	114 (27 %)
Male	304 (73 %)

Because of the great mobility of alpinists, the aim should be an *inter-nationally portable system* in education, standards and examination. It is desirable that participants be able to attain parts of the requisite education in different countries, but complete their final examination in a country and language of their own choice.

In our opinion, a *separate specification between mountain rescue doctors, expedition doctors or others* should be avoided - every „mountain and altitude physician“ should be *equally trained in all aspects of mountain medicine*.

Structure & aims

Training and further education of medical doctors in all aspects of mountain medicine, both in theory and practice by means of three separate one-week courses:

- Basic course
- Advanced winter course
- Advanced summer course

In each course the programme consists of the following related and linked-together elements:

- Mountain medicine workshops
- Mountain medicine practical exercises
- Climbing education

with the aim of relating the interconnections between the practice of alpinism and all the medical issues and problems that thereby ensue.

The TEACHING PRINCIPLES: The three elements of each course are interlinked in every way possible. Lectures on theory are combined with practical field experience in the mountain environment.

Elements

MOUNTAIN MEDICINE WORKSHOPS

Twenty hours per week (5 days á 4 hours). All topics are presented in five blocks. A one-hour lecture followed by four hours hands-on training sessions (training-college):

TOPICS:

Sports physiology and sports medicine in the mountains
Training, nutrition
Physical demands of mountaineering & climbing
Physiology and medicine of medium, high and extreme altitudes
Trekking-, expedition-, travel-medicine
Climbing with children and youths
Climbing for prevention & rehabilitation
Health risks and sicknesses in mountains areas
Suffocation, survival
Risk management
Mountain traumatology
Emergency care in the mountains
Cold injuries and avalanche medicine
Mountain rescue techniques
Helicopter rescue techniques
Mountain medical kit
Prevention of mountain accidents

AIMS:

Education and improvement of theoretical and practical know-ledge in all aspects of mountain and altitude medicine in two separate steps: In the basic course one learns the underlying principles; in the two advanced courses, these principles are enhanced on a higher level with the specific knowledge

required for differing conditions of climate, weather and difficulties.

MOUNTAIN MEDICINE PRACTICAL EXERCISES

Twenty hours per week, in the field and in small groups.

TOPICS:

Emergency care at the accident site
Fall in crevasses
Hanging on the rope
Mountain rescue techniques
Evacuation techniques (overland and by helicopter)
Avalanche rescue
Emergency bivouacs

AIMS:

The practical aspects of mountain medicine are taught under the most realistic conditions and in appropriate terrain. In the advanced courses, the conditions become more arduous.

CLIMBING AND MOUNTAINEERING TRAINING

The climbing program, led by special professional mountain guides, consists of theoretical and practical exercises to enhance the skill and abilities of the participants in mountaineering techniques. If possible, summits will be climbed during the week - but this is not the major task of the climbing training.

TOPICS:

Climbing equipment
Mountain meteorology
Orienteering
Snow techniques and avalanche prediction
Geology & glaciology
Preparation and performance of mountain tours
Mountaineering hazards, avoidance and prevention of accidents
Natural and environmental considerations
Bivouac techniques

Examination & diploma

From 1998 on, we are performing the following procedure:

- * After passing the three courses, a participant can pass an examination in all theoretical and practical aspects of mountain medicine;
- * The examination will be conducted by a commission headed by the chairmen of both organising societies.
- * After passing all portions of the full course and examination, an applicant receives the UIAA/IKAR-CISA/ISMM "International diploma of Mountain Medicine"
Up to 1999, 71 diplomas have been issued.
43 of these mountain medicine doctors are established as "Mountain and Altitude Medicine Advisory Boards": Their addresses (1999: 25 in Germany, 18 in Austria) are published and can be contacted for special mountain-medical advice.

Austrian Society for Mountain and Altitude Medicine

Founded APRIL 15. 1989
MEMBERS 1150 FROM 13 COUNTRIES (1999)
Austria 66%
Germany 28%
Others 6%
Physicians 76%
Students 6%
Others 18%

GOALS AND DUTIES:

communication- & information platform
international links
promotion of scientific projects
connection between sciences & practice
measures for health and safety in the mountains
education & training in mountain medicine
congresses & mountain medicine events
publishing of: newsletters, annual almanacs, books,
articles, folders, guidelines ...

DIVISIONS:

altitude physiology and medicine
trekking- and expedition medicine
mountain emergency medicine
ground rescue
helicopter rescue
mountain accidents
education
mountain sports medicine
sports climbing medicine
sports sciences
aeronautical medicine
neurology und psychology
history of mountain and altitude medicine

MAIN ACTIVITIES since November 1998

4 courses for Mountain Medicine (see above)
2 newsletters
Annual book 1999
Handbook for Trekking- and Expedition Medicine (4th edition 1999)

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