

Integrated Approaches at the Headache Centers: Multidisciplinary Headache Center with Nationwide Headache Network

Hartmut Göbel

Founder and Director
Kiel Headache and Pain Centre, Germany



Integrated care builds interdisciplinary networks across the different healthcare sectors. A conjoint effort towards clearly defined treatment goals is crucial for a medically effective and economically efficient care. In the regular care, patients with difficult to treat headaches are generally under the care of doctors of one specialty. An alternative is a multidisciplinary headache center with an interdisciplinary network, where care is provided by different disciplines (neurology, neurosurgery, behavioral psychology, psychiatry, psychosomatic medicine, physical therapy, sport therapy) across sectors of the health care system involving out- and inpatient care and treatment. Allowing creativity in the implementation of integrated care triggers competition for more effective ideas and better solutions. Based upon a summary of the development of integrated care and using the example of the nationwide migraine and headache treatment network in Germany, the successful organization and implementation of this cross-sector care within specialized pain therapy is illustrated. A nationwide network of pain therapists working hand in hand across the sectors, both in the outpatient and inpatient setting, using modern treatment methods, results in optimal pain relief. The treatment quality is assessed by continuous accompanying research, which confirms sustainable cost efficiency in all sectors of healthcare through analysis of both direct and indirect costs. In the meantime, all large statutory health insurance providers in Germany have joined this healthcare project. The large treatment network confirms the significant clinical and economic efficiency of specialized pain therapy. It shows that a modern and coordinated therapy effectively relieves headache, lowers costs sustainably and reduces incapacity for work periods. The patient satisfaction is very high. The care providers may directly participate in treatment success via risk-share arrangements.

Born on 22 December 1957 in Würzburg. Dual studies of medicine and psychology. 1985 diploma examination in psychology, 1986 medical state examination. Scholarship holder of the German National Merit Foundation and the Cusanuswerk scholarship. 1986 doctorate conferred ("summa cum laude", with highest honor) with a dissertation about pain psychophysics. 1992 postdoctoral thesis / lectureship with the topic pain measurement. Psychiatry residency at Ulm University (1986-1987). Neurological, neurosurgical and neuroradiological residencies at Kiel University (1987-1996). Director of the Pain Centre, Kiel University. Initiation, conceptualization and founding as well as director of the Kiel Neurological Headache and Pain Centre (1997 – present). Initiation and organisation of the national headache treatment network with 450 regional pain experts across Germany. Establishment of the German Migraine and Headache Centre, the nationwide integrated care network for migraine and headache treatment with the largest German statutory medical insurance companies.

Numerous national and international prizes, including Gedenkjahr Foundation for Science, Medtronic Scholarship, Award for Pain Research and Pain Therapy, Prize of the Kiel Medical Society, Janssen Headache Prize of the European Headache Federation, Rudolf-Frey Prize, Rudolf-Fritz-Weiß Prize, Financial Times Healthcare Prize, GenoFutura-Award, 1st Healthcare Networker Prize for the best realisation of integrated healthcare in Germany. Member of the editorial board of numerous scientific journals.

Many activities in scientific societies, including General Secretary of the German Migraine and Headache Society, President of the Training Academy of the German Migraine and Headache Society, Member of the WHO commission for the development of an international classification of pain disorders, founding member of the German interdisciplinary association for pain disorders etc. More than 450 publications across the entire range of pain therapy, monographs, original works and reviews, standard medical textbooks as well as patient literature, computer software and compact discs.

Professor Göbel is medical director and chief executive officer of the Kiel Neurological Headache and Pain Centre and the German national headache treatment network.