

ASKLEPIOS NEWSLETTER

Issue 1/2016



Photo: Asklepios

Dear Readers,

as one of the leading clinic operators in Germany, Asklepios provides medical treatment of the highest quality. Many of our clinics and specialist departments are well-known and held in high esteem. They are staffed by physicians who are among the best in their fields and are well-respected on the international stage. What's more: Hamburg is home to the largest cluster of acute-care clinics anywhere in Europe.

Our newsletter is intended to keep you informed of the latest developments in our clinics and to invite you to contact our specialists if you need medical attention.

Wishing you the best of health!

Dr Thomas Wolfram,
Chairman of Asklepios Kliniken GmbH

Clinic operator Asklepios

Asklepios is one of the largest operators of private clinics and healthcare facilities in Germany. Founded more than 30 years ago, the chain of clinics follows a responsible and sustainable strategy geared towards a high level of safety and quality. The group currently has more than 150 healthcare facilities spread across Germany between the Island of Sylt on the North Sea and Lindau by Lake Constance and employs more than 46,000 employees. In the 2015 fiscal year, the Asklepios treated around 2.3 million patients.

Medical quality management at the highest level is an area in which Asklepios particularly excels. The clinic operators benefit from the group's structure; by promoting the transfer of knowledge between the houses, the group is able to maintain exceptionally high standards of treatment. The results are also published regularly. The Medical Results Report appears annually, and 25 criteria on patient safety are regularly published on the Internet at www.qualitaetskliniken.de, of which Asklepios is among the charter members.



Photo: Asklepios

GYNAECOLOGY

The wish for children despite abdominal cancer: How minimally invasive tumour surgery preserves fertility

The treatment of uterine cancer used to be simple: the surgeon merely removed the entire organ. But this put an end to family planning. It was also necessary to perform a termination if the patient happened to be pregnant at the time of the operation.

There is an alternative, but this option is among the most demanding operative procedures in the field of gynaecology: minimally invasive surgery to preserve the organ. It requires immense experience, especially if the operation must be performed as conservatively as possible. Professor Christhardt Köhler and his team from the department of special operative and oncological gynaecology in Asklepios Klinik Altona are among Germany's foremost gynaecologists performing minimal procedures, and are specialised in conservative surgery on the female reproductive organs.

One of their particular specialities is the application of minimally invasive methods of removing abdominal tumours, a procedure that is commonly known as keyhole surgery. Professor Köhler is well-known internationally for his particular surgical techniques in the conservative removal of tumours and affected lymph nodes. He even applies them on some cancer sufferers during pregnancy without being forced to perform a termination. Köhler combines keyhole abdominal endoscopy (laparoscopy) with an operation that is carried out from the vagina. In this way he is able to remove cervical cancer discovered at an early stage in such a targeted manner that a later pregnancy remains possible. The procedure is considered a safe method to remove all of the malignant tissue in tumours of up to two centimetres. This technique can also be used on slightly larger tumours in individual cases and on the express wishes of the

patient, although it is then associated with an elevated risk of the cancer returning. The operation involves enclosing the cervical cancer in what is known as a cerclage. A natural birth is therefore not possible, and the mother will have to undergo a C-section.

This gentle surgical procedure has proven effective. Over two thirds of the patients who want to have children do indeed manage to conceive.

Professor Köhler's particular expertise now attracts patients from all over Germany to Hamburg, and enquiries about an operation in Hamburg-Altona to preserve fertility are also received from abroad. Nevertheless, there are still cases of cancer that require an open operation, even in this highly specialised facility. They include advanced ovarian cancer. Keyhole surgery can only be performed on ovarian cancer if it is discovered in an early stage. Nevertheless, laparoscopy frequently provides valuable services in the search for the most promising treatment. The technique gives Professor Köhler and his team of specialists more leeway to adjust treatment to the needs of the patient, as well as to coordinate the procedure with them and in their best interests.



Photo: Asklepios



Photo: grki (Fotolia.com)

ONCOLOGY

Liver metastases – A new surgical procedure is giving hope

Metastatic cancer that had spread to the liver was considered a dire omen or even a death sentence until just a few years ago. After all, its occurrence meant that the cancer had become incurable. But now there are methods that the specialists at Asklepios Klinik Barmbek in many cases use to remove liver metastases completely and to offer their patients a significantly brighter outlook for recovery.

Here, the surgeons in Barmbek exploit a particular feature of the liver that other organs do not possess: it is the only organ that can regenerate. Professor Karl-Jürgen Oldhafer and his team use state-of-the-art navigation systems to remove metastases from the organ by planning and simulating the operation beforehand by computer. This allows the liver surgeons to ensure that vital structures are preserved and that they do not remove excessive tissue from the liver. 25-35 percent functioning liver tissue is usually needed to prevent liver failure.

And the surgeons use a trick if the affected

part of the organ is too big for the body to do without it during detoxification: they separate the diseased section of the liver from the healthy part, and then inhibit the blood circulation through the diseased fraction. In this way it can still help during detoxification, but will only shrink slowly. And to balance things out the healthy part of the liver will grow. It takes only a few days until the healthy liver is sufficiently large to manage detoxification of the body by itself. So the surgeons perform a second procedure, in which they completely remove the cancerous fraction; the healthy part then continues to grow until the liver has almost completely regenerated.

The age of the patient, the type of tumour, the number and also the localisation of the metastases are key factors for the chances of this treatment succeeding. Broadly speaking, the liver will regenerate better in younger patients than in older ones. The procedure has proven particularly effective in the treatment of colorectal cancer patients with liver metastases. But there are types of tumour for which the procedure is not promising. Also, the method cannot be used if the metastases are located too close to major blood vessels.



Photo: Asklepios

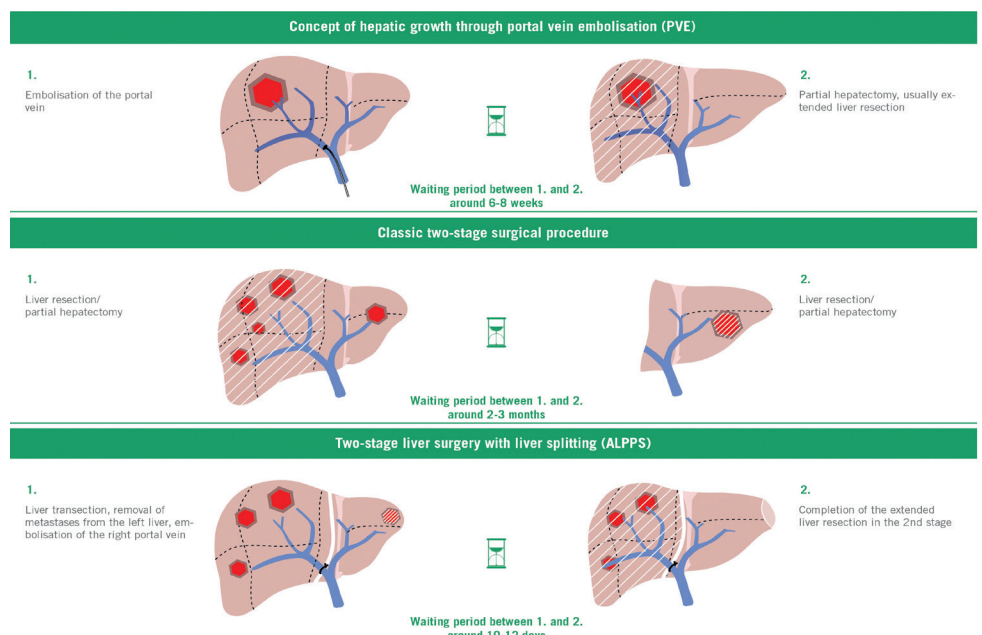


Photo: Asklepios

HAEMATOLOGY

Stem cell transplants to fight leukaemia

Stem cell transplantation offers a chance of recovery to patients suffering from leukaemia (blood cancer) and lymphoma (lymph node cancer), as it permits an extremely intense form of chemotherapy that destroys the haematopoietic cells in the bone marrow in addition to the cancer cells.

Physicians distinguish between 'autologous' transplantation, in which stem cells are harvested from the patient before chemotherapy and then reintroduced later on, and the more elaborate procedure of 'allogenic' transplantation. This involves transferring stem cells obtained from a suitable donor. The effects of the alien immune cells that are provided by the donor in allogenic stem cell treatment enable the administration of immunotherapy on the patient that can

even heal leukaemia and lymphoma when other forms of treatment do not promise long-term success.

Stem cell transplantation is an extremely elaborate procedure, as the patients temporarily lose their own immune system during treatment and therefore require protection against all kinds of pathogen until the transplanted stem cells have built a new immune system. Asklepios Klinik St. Georg in Hamburg has a special leukaemia ward with 16 treatment places. It provides patients with special hygienic protection following stem cell transplants in the treatment of leukaemia or lymphoma.

The leukaemia ward adheres to the latest recommendations issued by the professional medical society and provides all facilities and methods of a state-of-the-art intensive care unit: here, breathing and circulation can be monitored constantly, and even non-invasive respiration and



Photo: Asklepios

dialysis treatment are possible at all treatment places. A special filter system purifies the air so that patients are exposed to a substantially lower risk of infection.

The physicians perform stem cell transplantation on approximately every second day. In most cases this will involve a transfer from a healthy donor to a patient (allogenic stem cell transplantation). The department is therefore among the ten leading centres in Germany performing the largest number of allogenic stem cell transplants.

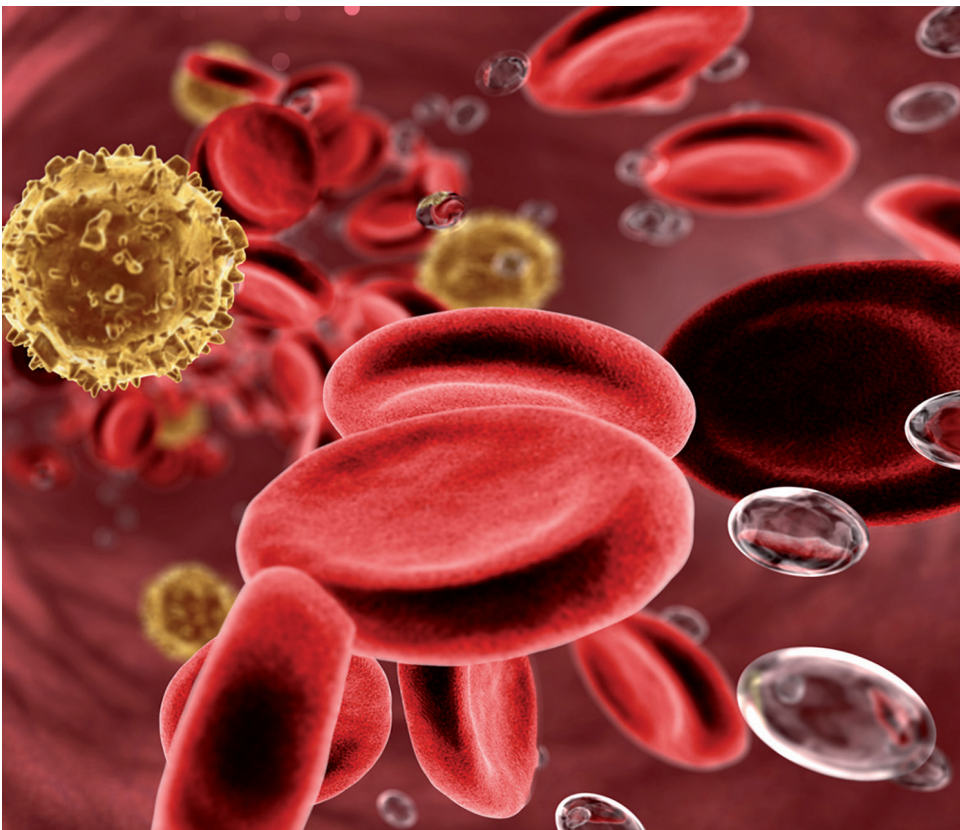


Photo: Frank Wagner (Fotolia.com)

Centres of cancer treatment with particular expertise



Photo: Asklepios

- Asklepios: acute-care clinic for somatic diseases
- ▲ Asklepios: specialist clinic for psychiatry
- Asklepios: post-acute/rehab clinic
- Asklepios: Other healthcare facilities (including day-care hospital, psychiatric outpatient clinics (PIA), health centre, care facility)
- * Facility under management

- MediClin: acute-care clinic for somatic diseases
- ▲ MediClin: specialist clinic for psychiatry
- MediClin: post-acute/rehab clinic
- MediClin: Other healthcare facilities (including day-care hospital, health centre, care home)

Gynaecology (gynaecology including tumours)

- Professor Christhardt Köhler
Asklepios Klinik Altona
www.asklepios.com/details/arztprofil~prld=1753~

Haematology (blood disorders, leukaemia)

- Professor Bertram Glaß
Asklepios Klinik St. Georg
www.asklepios.com/details/arztprofil~prld=17857~

Oncology (cancer medicine)

- Professor Axel Stang
Asklepios Klinik Barmbek
www.asklepios.com/details/arztprofil~prld=3453~
(treatment of lung cancer)
- Adjunct Professor Niels Reinmuth
Asklepios Fachkliniken Munich-Gauting
www.asklepios.com/details/arztprofil~prld=13018~
- Professor Klaus Herrlinger
Asklepios Klinik Nord
www.asklepios.com/details/arztprofil~prld=3992~

Video interview:

Professor Axel Stang discusses the treatment of cancer on

www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMdjyJtKZW4



Foreign private patients in the Asklepios Kliniken Hamburg

International medical tourism has strongly gained in importance in recent years. Increasing numbers of private patients from across the world are seeking modern treatment options abroad; either because they are unavailable in their home country or are limited to a certain degree or have long waiting lists. Lower costs may also be a reason for wishing to be treated abroad. German hospitals offer international clients the highest standards of treatment.

The number of foreign private patients in the Asklepios Kliniken in Hamburg alone has more than doubled since 2009. Many of our senior consultants enjoy an excellent reputation overseas. We work hard to ensure interested people from all over the world favour the excellent quality of therapies our hospitals provide. Every enquiry is answered quickly and professionally. We have also established and maintain co-operations in the countries of potential patients, take part in trade fairs and specialist events, organise clinic visits and promote exchanges between German and foreign doctors.

Private patients from Russia and CIS in particular entrust us with their confidence. They are referred to our doctors or travel independently following the recommendation of relatives and friends. We have now built co-operations with numerous public hospitals, private clinics, insurance companies and general practitioners in Russia and the CIS who specifically send their patients to Hamburg for treatment. Since the health systems in these countries cannot adequately cover the increasing demand for medical care, we are happy to be of service to the patients of these countries by providing high-quality health care. Particularly in Russian cities, but also in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine and the CIS countries, the number of patients seeking treatment abroad is expected to rise in the future. Confidence, particularly in the German medical profession, is quite rightly very high, so that patients are targeting Germany for their treatment options. The majority of interested patients tend to rely on word of mouth, e.g. endorsements from patients who have already been treated. Our doctors and our clinics have also

gained a good reputation overseas this way and are becoming better known. Influential politicians and economic giants, prominent athletes and artists who have undergone successful treatment in Hamburg play a major role in attracting patients as their recommendation carries great weight. In this respect, it is not surprising that the percentage of patients who specifically wish to visit a certain doctor or a certain clinic is steadily rising.

We have also observed a rise in interest among patients from Arab countries. We are receiving increasing numbers of patient requests, principally from the United Arab Emirates but also from other Arabic countries.

More and more patients from Scandinavia are also being referred specifically to our doctors. This is partly due to the fact that certain medical services in Scandinavian countries are not available owing to the relatively low number of inhabitants. Patients are then referred for treatment abroad and the services are publicly funded. Nowadays, there is sometimes a sizeable waiting list for certain interventions, so to circumvent this many private patients are looking for alternatives abroad. Some patients find information on modern treatments that are not available in their home country and finance them here privately.

The language barriers and cultural differences make it fundamentally important to care for foreign patients in their native language or – depending upon the language skills of the patient – in English. This comprises detailed coordination of the patient's treatment, efficient support in all organisational and medical issues before, during and after treatment as well as ensuring smooth communication between the patient and the medical staff. On request, all Asklepios Kliniken can of course also organise individual amenities such as a chauffeur service, hotel reservations and sightseeing tours. The patient and their companions will be looked after during the entire hospital stay.

The 5-star hotel Atlantic Kempinski in Hamburg has been part of the Asklepios Group since the start of 2015. Overlooking the Alster, the hotel boasts an attractive central location and is one of the best sights in Hamburg thanks to its history,

Art Nouveau architecture and Hanseatic character. We are able to offer our patients and their companions in Hamburg the highest standards of accommodation at attractive special conditions.



Photo: Asklepios

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Photo: Asklepios