

Practice-relevant communication in demand

NovoAcademy is a complete success



All those involved were on tenterhooks – how would the concept presented by NovoAcademy combining the provision of medical

further education in type 2 diabetes and of training in communication skills be received?

Months of preparatory work, first-class speakers and pleasant surroundings ensured that the initial seminar was a complete success. “I really learnt a lot and it was fun too”, said one doctor - a typical comment from one of the participants at the two-day seminar.

There was a relaxed atmosphere among the participants on the evening of the first day of the seminar. They were avidly awaiting the last point on the programme for the day, “How can I bring the therapy across to patients so that they can accept it as part of their lives?”, a problematical area for many of the participants. “I hope it won’t be too theoretical or I’ll switch off”, whispered one of them to her neighbour. Fortunately the presentation by communication counsellor Hansruedi Stahel from Switzerland was anything but boring. Indeed his performance was brilliant, providing an inspiring and instructive introduction to the main topic for the next day’s session, guiding patients by means of problem-oriented questions. Stahel maintains that patients do not believe what their doctors tell them, but only believe what they themselves say. As a result he recommends that doctors should explain as little as possible and instead should ask their patients questions and let them talk.

The next day participants had the opportunity to put this into practice using a series of case studies as examples. After a brief general presentation of the subject, the participants split up into small working groups. The groups were deliberately kept small so that each member could make a full contribution. And that they did. Lively discussions soon developed about the problems encountered in daily practice, proposals were made and examined from all sides. And when things were not going as well as they should have, colleagues were always ready to help out.

What precisely is the patient’s problem? What needs and wishes do they have? How can their individual experiences be reconciled with the requirements of an effective therapy? Such questions were resolved satisfactorily in the small groups with the assistance of the experienced moderators, as was shown by the presentation of the results to the whole group at the end of the discussion group phase.

So what did the participants make of the two-day seminar? “For me the two days were a complete success.” “I am taking a lot of stimulating ideas back home with me.” “At last a seminar that wasn’t boring.” “I would never have thought that communication was so important. It is worth making changes there.” There were positive opinions and satisfied expressions on all sides among the participants, mingled with a slight disappointment that they could not learn even more about the fascinating subject of communication.