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Research in Graubünden

Practical training

Surgical training has a long tradition in Davos

Have you ever thought about how future surgeons learn their trade? First, they need to know the human anatomy inside out. In addition, they assist experienced colleagues during operations or look over their shoulders. In order to practice all-important procedures systematically and without endangering the patients, there are practice courses. These include the internationally recognized Davos Course, which has been held once a year in Davos since 1984.



Various surgical steps can be practiced on an artificial torso. Picture: Jens Weber

The Davos course specializes in so-called visceral surgery, which deals with the organs in the abdominal cavity. Young surgeons at various stages of their training learn the basics of surgical skills in an intensive course week: from making a correct surgical knot to performing a gall bladder removal using minimally invasive keyhole surgery. From April 6 to 11, around 280 young doctors will be training individual surgical steps and entire operations under the guidance of over fifty experienced surgeons for general or visceral surgery. They practice on animal organs specially prepared for this purpose and on artificial models.

Daniel Frey, chief physician of the surgical clinic at Wetzikon Hospital, has been involved in the Davos course since 2006. Since 2018, he has been a member of the Board of Trustees and jointly responsible for the strategic development of the course. He still remembers his own training well: "At that time, training and continuing education were not as structured as they are today. One was more or less dependent on the favor of one's superiors. However, the Davos course was already very well developed at that time and offered younger colleagues a unique opportunity to deepen their knowledge of visceral surgery for an entire week."

Benjamin Weixler, Senior Physician for General Surgery, has been the main organizer of the Davos Course since 2016. It is important to him that new developments in the field of visceral surgery are reflected in the content: "Since this year we have a new robot console on site with which robot-assisted surgery can be trained. Since 2018, we have also been offering a module for the surgery of severely overweight patients, a special discipline of visceral surgery that has developed in recent years. Virtual reality is also used in surgical training. Similar to a computer game, participants can perform a virtual operation at various simulators, the individual steps of which are closely monitored by the computer. The young surgeons trained with us work much more safely and precisely in the operating theatre and are ultimately more independent in clinical everyday life".

The Experts



Daniel Frey

In addition to his surgical work, Daniel Frey spent many years researching in the field of tumor immunology and from 2006 to 2008 headed a research group at the University Hospital of Basel. He spends his free time with family sports and cooking. Benjamin Weixler was born in Berne and is a senior physician for general surgery at the Charité Berlin. In his spare time, he also likes to play sports or his clarinet. Please direct your questions on the subject to the experts at info@graduateschool.ch. by 3 April.

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