



QUARTS

Quality for Assisted
Reproductive Technologies
in Switzerland

Information on the Swiss Quality System for IVF Laboratories (QUARTS)

Worb, 26 June 2018

Dear Colleagues,

Today, we would like to give you an update on the QUARTS quality label of the Swiss Society for Reproductive Medicine (SGRM) and the Swiss Society for Gynaecology and Obstetrics (SGGG/AGER). At the beginning of the year, we were able to report on the first concrete steps, namely the approval of the SGRM and the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Endokrinologie und Reproduktionsmedizin (AGER) of the SGGG, the first full version of the list of requirements and the appointment of Dr. Fabien Murisier as President of the Accreditation Commission.

In late January, early February, pilot accreditations were given to three centres (fiore St. Gallen, St. Anna Luzern and Gyn A.R.T., Zurich) under the direction of Professor Thomas Ebner, Austria, and the support of the Doc-Cert Company, Kreuzlingen, in terms of system audit.

In the interim, the Accreditation Commission has expanded with the arrival of competent and experienced experts in the field of embryology, namely Graziella Bracone, Luzern, Alejandro Montoya, Zurich and Oliver Sterthaus, Olten.

The team of expert auditors has also grown meanwhile with other internationally renowned specialists including Professor Thomas Ebner, Austria, Dr. Jana Liebenthron, Germany, Professor Laura Rienzi, Italy and Dr. Martine Nijs, the Netherlands.

The following individuals have kindly stepped forward to serve on the Accreditation Board which acts as a supervisory body: Conrad Engler, Betroffenennetzwerk Kinderwunsch and Professor Daniel Surbek, SGGG Quality Commission.

A QUARTS event to disseminate information was held in Bern on 3 May. Around 40 people from IVF centres throughout Switzerland attended.



Conrad Engler



Dr. Fabien Murisier

Prof. Thomas Ebner

Presentation of a pilot certificate

Photos: Scenes from the QUARTS information dissemination event held in Bern on 3 May 2018

On 5 June, Dr. Felix Häberlin had the opportunity to present the QUARTS system to the FMedG Working Party of the Swiss Association of Cantonal Officers of Health (Kantonsärztevereinigung). He explained that, with QUARTS, the expert associations have actively taken on board the alternative option outlined in FMedV (Art 4, Art. 10) with the aim of offering a demanding, subject-specific, independent and efficient accreditation option for IVF laboratories. The basic ideas behind QUARTS were discussed in detail in the lively discussion that ensued. The Canton physicians in attendance asked for more details with particular emphasis on the differences between the QUARTS list of requirements and accreditation standards ISO 15189 and ISO 17025. The working party presumably will inform the Board of the Canton physicians about their deliberations and recommendations before the summer break. The working party rated their personal dialogue with the professional associations as positive.

On 15 June, the QUARTS system was presented to the SGGG Executive Board. The project was unanimously approved in the vote that followed.

On 11 June, we received a response from BAG, Biomedicine Department, to our informative letter dated 7 May 2018 in which the initiative of the professional associations was warmly welcomed. BAG also acknowledged the fact that the QUARTS accreditation system would be crucial for ensuring quality assurance in IVF Laboratories and that the Canton Health Authorities should examine and, if appropriate, recognise the legal compliance of the QUARTS system.

Meanwhile, nine other IVF centres have already expressed an interest in QUARTS accreditation.

Overall, the creation and development of this quality system for IVF laboratories can be deemed successful to date. The joint venture of the two Swiss reproductive medicine groups, SGRM and AGER, together with the broad acceptance of the Executive Board of the Swiss Society for Gynaecology and Obstetrics, is a vital pre-requisite for the success of this project. Further joint efforts are now needed to build acceptance of the system, both at Canton Authority level and for those IVF centres who have shown interest. We would be delighted to keep you up-to-date with the latest developments and especially on future evaluations by the Canton Medical Services. If you are interested in obtaining QUARTS system accreditation, contact the SGRM, Doc-Cert or, alternatively, complete the form on the Homepage.

Kind regards,

Dr. Felix Häberlin
SGRM President

Dr. Sabine Steimann
AGER President

Dr. Fabien Murisier
President of the Accreditation Commission