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Early Prenatal Diagnosis – New Advances in Early Pregnancy Care

Goals and Responsibilities of the FMF-Germany



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FMF-Germany Early Prenatal Diagnosis –

New Advances in Early Pregnancy Care

Various interdisciplinary groups of leading gynaecologists, laboratory physicians, human geneticists and application-focused companies have associated in early 2002 to explore and discuss possibilities in prenatal risk assessment for fetal chromosome anomalies and other diseases that may develop in the first third of pregnancy (First-Trimester Screening). This group has given rise to the Fetal Medicine Foundation (FMF) Germany – an interdisciplinary charitable association aiming to promote research and training in prenatal medicine. The members of the Fetal Medicine Foundation Germany feel bound by self-obligation to ensure the best possible standard for the introduction of first-trimester screening in Germany, right from the very start. This requires a high level of standardisation in diagnostic procedure to be implemented under strict scientific quality control.

All institutions and individuals involved have agreed to pursue a uniform test concept in their performance of first-trimester screenings from the first of April 2002 onward. The same procedure is demanded by the



scientific advisory board of the German Federal Medical Association in its guidelines on the prenatal diagnosis of diseases and disease predispositions.

There is broad consensus that the internationally evaluated procedures of the Fetal Medicine Foundation (FMF) London and of DEGUM (German Society of Ultrasound in Medicine) should serve as guidelines for the establishment of first-trimester screening. Their shared goal is the area-wide and fastest possible establishment of first-trimester screening in Germany – certified and controlled by the FMF Germany/DEGUM. The same standard is poised for introduction

in the German-speaking countries of Austria and Switzerland, in cooperation with the ÖGUM (Austrian Society of Ultrasound in Medicine) and the SGUM (Swiss Society of Ultrasound in Medicine). Moreover, an evaluation of future strategies in prenatal diagnosis is envisaged, and so is reliable and ongoing contact with the press, as well as with self-help groups and hence with women in pregnancy.

At end-2001, the FMF London, represented by Kypros Nicolaides, has transferred both the training and the certification mandate to the FMF-Germany, represented by Prof. Eberhard Merz.