



A bird's eye view of historic Hamburg

Hamburg – a prime destination for complex medical treatment

Middle East Health travelled to Germany in September last year to visit a few select hospitals and speak to leading doctors in the country. In essence, we wanted to find out why German health care is so attractive to Arab patients. The article is run in two parts: Part one, Hamburg in this issue and Part two, Berlin in the next issue.

Many patients from the Arab world travel to Germany for healthcare and have been doing so for decades. Simply, they trust German medical expertise to resolve their health problems, particularly when they are too complex for treatment at home. They trust German healthcare, for good reason – the country plays a leading role in medical care, research and innovation in the world and is one of the best places in the world for the successful treatment of complex cases.

The country has many outstanding hospitals and clinics spread across the country, staffed by some of the most well

recognised doctors and specialists in the world. There were too many for us to visit them all, so we focussed on Hamburg and Berlin as these cities have a concentration of leading hospitals and clinics that cater to international patients in general and Arab patients specifically.

In this article, we speak to doctors in Hamburg. In Part 2 of this article – to be published in the March-April 2017 issue of *Middle East Health*, we will focus on Berlin.

We thank Hamburg Tourism and Visit Berlin for assisting us with our itinerary and accommodation. Without their generous help and efficient organisation, it would

have been very difficult to successfully complete our full agenda.

They do fantastic work promoting their respective cities and if you are thinking of visiting these wonderful, vibrant and culturally rich destinations – for healthcare or tourism – the best place to start your research is on their websites.

■ For Hamburg, go to: www.hamburg.com – and their dedicated website for international patients seeking healthcare in the city is: www.healthcare-hamburg.com

■ For Berlin go to: www.visitBerlin.com – and their dedicated website for international patients seeking healthcare

in the city is: health.visitBerlin.com

All the hospitals and clinics we visited have international patient offices – set up specifically to provide comprehensive services for travelling patients and their accompanying relatives. This includes initial consultation, estimated cost of procedure, visa assistance, airport pick-up, accommodation for accompanying relatives, translation services, etc. They are there to make this process as smooth as possible and should be the first point of call for any patient considering treatment in one of these hospitals or clinics.

Hamburg

Hamburg is one of Europe’s leading centres for medicine. The city has more than 50 hospitals and 30,000 medical professionals offering the highest standards of medicine. The services offered by the city’s hospitals and around 5,000 doctors in practice encompass all conceivable medical spheres – from diagnosis and treatment to therapy and rehabilitation. Combine this with the city’s historical and cultural attractions and you have one of the most attractive health tourism destinations in the world.

Hamburg Tourism notes that because of continued growth in the healthcare sector, the government is assisting this dynamic industry by “promoting sustainable business models and innovations through



Hamburg – with the newly opened Elbphilharmonie building in the background

collaboration between research and teaching, business and politics, associations and interest groups, with a view to ensuring an exemplary healthcare system”.

They are also focussing on the internationalisation of their services and note that “existing cooperation

agreements with the countries of the Arab world will allow a bilateral transfer of knowledge. Close personal ties between researchers and doctors with their world-wide counterparts benefit both sides, not least international patients in Hamburg”.

Wish for a child

Kinderwunsch – Fertility Clinic Valentinshof is a private fertility clinic in Hamburg. Kinderwunsch literally means “child wish” – and for couples wishing to have a child, but are struggling with infertility problems, this is the place to go. When you enter this clinic – the only private fertility clinic in Hamburg – you are struck by the German sophistication, precision, and the cleanliness and purity of the place. However, it is when you speak to the doctors that you understand fully why this clinic is so successful in fulfilling the dreams and wishes of apparently infertile couples to have a

child. Beyond their expertise, there is empathy, compassion and ambiance of calm in their presence.

Dr Anja Dawson, gynaecologist and obstetrician, with specialisation in gynaecological endocrinology and reproductive medicine, leaves a lasting impression for her compassion, understanding and professionalism. She is one of a team of four highly skilled doctors and biologists. They include Dr Ulrich Knuth, gynaecologist, obstetrician and a leading andrology (male reproductive health) specialist; as well as Dr Andreas Schepers, reproductive biologist and



Dr Anja Dawson



senior clinical embryologist and Dr Elke Leuschner, reproductive biologist, who run the laboratory.

Fertility Clinic Valentinshof has an exceptional success rate in producing pregnancies in couples who have virtually given up hope of having a child. They put this down to several factors, including the expertise of the doctors, technicians and embryologists, the advanced technology they use and the quality of their laboratory – as well as the somewhat less tangible, but equally important, empathy they offer, which enables the couple to feel at ease in this ‘oasis of calm’, as they refer to their clinic and which is immediately apparent when you visit it.

Their practice offers a complete range of fertility treatments – from optimising the body’s natural cycles to assisted or in-vitro fertilisation (IVF).

“We take the time to try all reasonable means of conceiving naturally wherever possible,” Dr Dawson explained.

They have a holistic approach designed to make the treatment all about the couple themselves. “In our

fertility clinic, the male partner is directly involved in the therapy. From discussions with our patients, we know that couples appreciate and feel better about their treatment when both parties are involved,” she said.

“We draw information on the latest in fertility treatments from international congresses and publications. Any significant developments that we find worthy are integrated directly into our treatments.

“We work with the most modern equipment and we use our own IVF laboratory. In constructing our practice, we paid special attention to using clean, low-pollutant materials throughout, particularly in the IVF lab,” Dr Dawson told *Middle East Health*.

She said they guarantee couples the greatest possible discretion. “We keep the waiting times as short as possible, and we offer individual rooms in our surgery area as a matter of course.”

As well as providing a full range of diagnostics and treatment for women, the clinic also offers diagnostics for men. This is andrology specialist Dr Knuth’s responsibility. He is one of Europe’s leading

andrologists and has knowledge of the latest advances in this specialist field of male reproductive health.

“We provide hope for men who have been told their sperm are no good for fertilisation. We can check tissue in the testes and extract a few healthy sperm, which can be used for IVF,” Dr Knuth explained.

Dr Dawson is also an experienced prenatal doctor and has many years of experience with the monitoring and care of high-risk pregnancies, such as with multiple pregnancies, gestational diabetes and preeclampsia.

The clinic also offers hormone consultation in which they diagnose and treat hormonal irregularities, such as Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, irregular menstrual cycles, thyroid disorders in women, and early menopause.

The doctors work with a range of partners in associated disciplines, such as nutrition, osteopathy, psychology, genetics and urology.



Kinderwunsch – Fertility Clinic Valentinshof

kinderwunsch-valentinshof.de