

Thyroid Research of the University of Bonn

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Nuclear Medicine in Germany has a relatively strong position due to the high incidence of thyroid diseases related to iodine deficiency. Since the mid-eighties, iodine supplementation is performed in Germany (iodinated salt, iodinated bread etc.). This has led to a decrease of the iodine deficiency, changing iodine deficiency from grade 2-3 WHO to 0-1 WHO. The beneficial results were a decrease of the goitre incidence from approximately 30% to 10%. There was also a shift from follicular to papillary thyroid cancer; the percentage of papillary cancer is now in Germany 75-80%. The number of radioiodine therapies in benign thyroid disease decreased by 20%. On the other hand, the incidence of Hashimoto thyroiditis increased from 0.4 to 2.5%. In addition to this, Graves' disease has become more aggressive so that the success rate of antithyroid drug therapy is very limited.

During the eighties, our thyroid research was focussed on thyroid hormone and iodine therapy of goitre, including also some research of thyroid diseases during pregnancy. In the nineties, we focussed on thyroid cancer and published data on high dose radioiodine therapy in advanced thyroid cancer (300 mCi) as well as PET. The Publication of the German multi center trial using PET in thyroid cancer (European Journal of Nuclear Medicine) belongs to our "most cited papers". Beginning in 2002, we extended our research to PET-CT in thyroid cancer. Other papers were published on the significance of TG measurements combined with the post therapy radioiodine uptake test. We also participated in a study evaluating percutaneous radiation therapy in iodine negative thyroid cancer. We also focussed on Octreoscan imaging of iodine negative thyroid cancer including medullary tumors.

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