

a report by

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Skin cancer, allergies and sexually transmitted diseases are increasing; the same is true for the demand in cosmetic dermatology. Dermatology is among those specialisations that have shown the most innovations in medical technology, pharmacy and scientific knowledge. Biologics for chronic immunologic diseases, imaging systems in diagnosis or new methods in dermatologic oncology are among them. Newly developed laser and light-based technology offers non-invasive, non-systemic and medication-free treatment alternatives.

Psoriasis, eczema, seborrheic dermatitis, vitiligo or pigmentation, signs of ageing skin, warts, acne, fungus and skin cancer are common skin disorders that affect millions. In some way, everyone will be affected by dermatological problems at some time in their life.

However, skin disease patients often do not receive adequate medical support, depending on healthcare systems, which vary significantly in Europe. Direct access to a dermatologist is limited in some EU countries, especially where dermatologists work solely as consultants in hospitals. Other countries have reduced spending on dermatologic care.

Skin cancer, including the very serious melanoma, is fatal unless diagnosed and treated early. Allergies, venous leg ulcers and sexually transmitted skin diseases continue to increase in Europe. A recent survey of youths in London concluded that while 22.5% had a skin disease that could benefit from medical care, only 6% had consulted their physician.

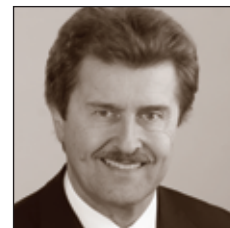
Today's patients and consumers are no longer satisfied just to survive, they long for a higher quality of life. Studies show that chronic skin diseases – itching, cosmetic disorders and malignancy or infections of the skin – reduce the quality of life on a scale comparable to heart disease.

Dermatologists are best able to offer expert, cost-effective medical, surgical and cosmetic care for the skin, hair and nails. We believe that all people should have access to high-quality dermatologic care and that this care should be provided by physicians of their choice.

European dermatology offers a broad variety of services, including subspecialisations in allergy, phlebology, oncology, dermatologic surgery, etc. Physicians in Europe are educated to a high level, maintained through continuing medical education organised on national levels as well as through the European Academy of Dermato-Venerology (EADV). The EADV promotes and supports research in order to ensure patients the best possible quality of care for disorders of their skin, hair and nails.

Patients know that dermatologists offer the best service in this field and are ready to cover the costs where insurers decline to do so. This allows dermatology to become a medical specialisation of the future, gaining impetus booming cosmetic and laser treatments.

*European Dermatology Review 2006* provides an invaluable reference to these key issues confronting professionals within the field of dermatology. ■



Klaus Fritz is Vice President and board member of the European Society of Laser Dermatology (ESLD) and board member of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venerology (EADV). He is also Head of the Public Relations Committee of the EADV, and 2006 Secretary General of the German Dermatology Association. Dr Fritz is head of a private practice offering services in dermatology, allergy, cosmetic dermatology, lasers, drug testing, environmental and occupational dermatology, dermatological laboratory, and male fertility in Landau, Germany, and is consultant to several hospitals. He is a member of scientific advisory boards, consultant to several companies for the testing of new pharmaceuticals, cosmetic products and clinical studies, a member of the editorial and scientific board of several journals, scientific and popular publications, and president of two annual congresses. Dr Fritz undertook medical studies at the Universities Frankfurt and Saarbrücken from 1973 to 1980.