Asia largest growth market for German dental equipment

Daniel Zimmermann
DTI

LEIPZIG, Germany: More and more German dental equipment is exported to Asia, new figures released by the Association of German Dental Manufacturers have revealed. According to the organisation’s latest member survey, 40 per cent of all manufacturers reported an increase in sales in that region in 2009. Less growth was observed in Western Europe and the US, the two main importers of German dental equipment.

Total German dental exports fell by almost 10 per cent last year due to the ongoing financial economic turmoil in most parts of the world. At the same time, domestic sales increased by 2.5 per cent to over €1.62 billion. Germany currently exports over 50 per cent of its domestically-fabricated dental equipment abroad.

VDDI chairman Dr Martin Rickert commented that the tense situation in the global economy has significantly affected consumer behaviour and willingness to invest in new equipment. Submarkets have also shown mixed results during the course of the year. He added that despite the slow economic recovery, expectations for exports in 2010 remain positive with the growing interest in aesthetic-driven solutions and increasing standards of living in emerging countries like Brazil, Russia, India or China accelerating demand.

With a total annual turnover of more than €3 billion, Germany is the second largest market for dental and laboratory equipment worldwide, only surpassed by the United States.

India set to launch domestic implant

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HONG KONG/LEIPZIG, Germany: A government-funded low-cost dental implant from India is said to be close to market release. The new tooth replacement developed by Delhi researchers as part of the country’s New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative is supposed to take on the country’s high prevalence of edentulism. According to government statistics, between 12 and 30 per cent of Indians over the age of 60 are suffering from complete tooth loss.

The project, which is said to have cost almost a US$1 million, took five years to complete and is now undergoing human trials. Previous research on rabbits has shown promising results in regard to strength and susceptibility of the implant, lead researcher Prof. Mahesh Verma from the Maulana Azad Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi said. While final costs for commercial release still need to be calculated, they are expected to be significantly less than other tooth replacements currently available in the market.

“It will be kept affordable as that is the primary objective for this development,” Dr Verma told Dental Tribune Asia Pacific. “It is to serve the Indian masses.”

Most dental implants placed in India are imported from overseas and, therefore, only affordable to a small part of the population. Imports are estimated to cost between US$550–650 while the national average monthly income has only tipped US$65 in 2009, according to figures of the Central Statistical Organisation.

Dr Verma estimates that 60,000 to 70,000 implants are placed by dentists in India each year which falls short compared to its neighbour China. The country is also competing with other countries in the increasing medical and dental tourism market.

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