

Hand Surgery in the Czech Republic

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History

The Hand Surgery Club was established in the Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia respectively) in the year 1986 and was transformed into the Czechoslovak Society of Hand Surgery 1 year later. As the first president of this Society associate professor Karel Dlabal MD was appointed. In 1997 Czechoslovak Society of Hand Surgery was divided into two separate societies for Czech and Slovak Republic and thus the Czech Society for Surgery of the Hand was established. Its first president was professor Václav Smrčka MD. Since then, this Society has been part of the Czech Medical Society of Jan Evangelista Purkyně, which covers the majority of medical societies in the Czech Republic.

The beginnings of hand surgery in the Czech countries can be traced back to the middle of the 19th century. It was under the scope of general surgery than. Some articles relating to the hand surgery were published.



Professor Eduard Albert, native Czech, born in Žamberk (Bohemia), attained the chair of surgery in Vienna between 1881 and 1900. He published articles about tendon sheath (1) nerve transplant (2) and arthrodesis (3)



Professor Karel Maydl published works about injuries of tendons and ligaments of the hand in 1882 and works about the ulnar and median nerves.



Professor Arnold Jirásek published a monograph in the Czech language about inflammatory hand diseases (4).



During the first half of the 20th century hand surgery was perceived as a specific medical field, which was initially pursued by plastic surgeons. One of the pioneers of reconstructive hand surgery was a famous Czech plastic surgeon Professor František Burian. It was him, who established one of the world's first independent plastic surgery departments. That was in Prague shortly after the First World War. In turned into the first Czechoslovak clinic of plastic surgery in the year 1934.

During the second half of the 20th century, original scientific articles and books about congenital hand defects, hand injuries and reconstruction were published. The first successful replant of an amputated finger in the Czechoslovak Republic took place in 1978 in Brno. The introduction of microsurgical techniques into plastic and hand surgery accelerated the development of specialization. After 1989, cooperation with foreign hand surgery societies, including the European and international federations, further accelerated the evolution of hand surgery in the Czech Republic.

Training

At this time, hand surgery is not a separate specialty in the Czech Republic and there is no examination. There are no criteria according to which the surgeon could be classified as a hand surgeon. Most hand surgeons have been trained in plastic surgery, orthopaedics or traumatology. Training is unique for each of that specializations and takes 5 to 6 years.



The Czech Society for Surgery of the Hand (website: www.handsurgery.cz) is a member of International Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand (IFSSH) since 1992 and a member of Federation of European Societies for Surgery of the Hand (FESSH) since 2007. Presently, the Society has 147 basic members, of which 23 core members in International Club of our Society can take full advantages of membership of our Society in international Societies and Federations. Most members are plastic surgeons, orthopaedists or traumatologists. They represent the overall organization of medical care for patients with hand diseases and injuries in this country.

The Society organizes its congress every two years, at different venues. Each congress lasts two days and has 150 to 250 attendees from the Czech and Slovak Republic. The congress is often prefaced by a 1-day course focused on a current hand surgery topic

In recent years, the congress is held together with the Czech Society of Hand Therapy.

The Society also organizes periodic three years lasted instructional course Basics in Hand Surgery. The Society takes place even in organizing of cadaveric courses, which is held by the Educational Centre for Practical Anatomy (ECPA) in Brno (www.ecpa-cz.com).

Society cooperates with Acta Chirurgiae Plasticae for the publication of original articles. The Society does not have its scientific journal.

Major practice

Medical care of hand is provided by both state and municipal medical facilities as well as by private health care providers. Most hand surgery health care is covered by mandatory health insurance.

Traumatologists and plastic surgeons are those who mainly take care of hand injuries.

Orthopaedists are those who mainly manage chronic bone and joint problems, including rheumatoid arthritis.

Plastic surgeons predominantly perform the surgery of tendons and soft tissue, congenital disabilities, and other specific diseases of the hand.

However, with the continuing education and interdisciplinary cooperation, there is increasing cooperation among all of these specialists.

In the Czech Republic, there has been for decades a 24-hour replant service provided mainly by the two university clinics of plastic surgery in Prague and Brno. Non full-time service is also in the plastic surgery departments in Ostrava, České Budějovice, Olomouc and Vysoké nad Jizerou.

The Czech Republic has the only one specialized hospital for hand surgery. Hand and Plastic Surgery Institute in Vysoké nad Jizerou, founded in the year 1975. It also serves as a training and educational centre for hand surgeons and hand therapists. It also cares about the majority of the inborn hand malformations in the whole country. The head of this institute was the president of Czech Society for Surgery of the Hand in the years 2006-2018.

The future:

In the future, the Society aims to establish hand surgery as a speciality of its own. The education and final examination are going to be defined. Of course, the European Hand Diploma examination would be fully accepted instead.

Further improvement of the cooperation among the participating specialists and more intimate collaboration with the hand therapists is necessary. The aim is to shorten the delay between surgical treatment and subsequent rehabilitation.

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2) Lehrbuch der Chirurgie und Operationslehre. Vorlesungen für praktische Ärzte und Studierende, Vol I. Wien Leipzig, Urban & Schwarzenberg, 1887:527),

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