



**Austrian Society of Surgery for the Hand**  
Österreichische Gesellschaft für Handchirurgie

## HISTORY

In the European history of hand surgery, Austria has an outstanding position. This has been earned by some internationally well-known personalities, who dedicated their professional efforts to the scientific progress. It was early in the last century, when Austrian surgeons recognized that a specialized hand surgery education is essential to provide optimal care for hand injuries. Not forgetting its roots, this spirit has been continued by Austrian surgeons until today and transferred into the challenging high-tech environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Some of the famous names among Austrian surgeons contributed to the hand surgery are given below. Johannes Hartlieb (1400-1468) published the oldest German written book of hand surgery "Buch von der Hand". Simon Zeller (1746-1816) used a triangular dorsal flap for renovation of the interdigital space after syndactyly correction. Dr. med. Karl Langer von Edenberg (Ritter von Edenberg) (1819-1887) described "Spaltlinien der Haut (skin ridges)". Dr. med. Wenzel Leopold Gruber (1814-1890), an Austrian anatomist, published numerous works on anatomical variations of the hand as well as the Martin-Gruber connection (connection of the ulnar and median nerve at the forearm). Prof. Dr. med. Carl Nicoladoni (1847-1902) performed thumb reconstruction with pollicisation of toes, developed tendon transpositions. Prof. Dr. med. Robert Kienböck (1871-1953) a radiologist described Aseptic bone necrosis of the lunate. Dr. Ludwig Kirchmayr (1873-1928) performed Kirchmayr tendon suture technique in the hand. Dr. med. Arthur Steindler (1878-1959) performed biceps tendon plasty and tendon transposition in the hand. Prof. Dr. med. Lorenz Böhler (1885-1973) gained worldwide fame with his work on fracture treatment and emphasized the importance of special focus on hand injuries. Prof. Lorenz Böhler was awarded a "pioneer of hand surgery" and is one of the most distinguished personalities in Austrian hand surgery history. Prof. Dr. med. Josef Ender (1915-1980) published on Ender plate and scaphoid plating. Prof. Dr. med. Otto Russe (1913-1983) performed scaphoid pseudarthrosis surgery.

Prof. Dr. med. Jörg Böhler (1917-2005) completed German translation of Bunell's: "Surgery of the hand", foundation of the "Wiener Handkurse" course series that is still being held today. Dr. med. Ernst Scharizer (1922-2009) was one of the main editors of the journal "Handchirurgie" (changed in 1983 into "Handchirurgie, Mikrochirurgie, Plastische Chirurgie"). Prof. Dr. med. Emil Beck (1931-2001) in Medical University Innsbruck published on surgical treatment of Kienbock disease, including transposition of a vascularized pisiform bone into the lunate bone (Beck's procedure). Prof. Dr. med. Hanno Millesi (1927-2017) played a key role in peripheral nerve surgery, and was a co-editor of the "Handchirurgie" and was awarded with "Pioneer of Hand Surgery" in 1998, a founding member of the Austrian Society of Hand Surgery (ÖGH). Prof. Dr. med. Hildegunde Piza-Katzer in Medical University Innsbruck (1999-2008) focused on treatment of congenital hand deformities, and was awarded with "Pioneer of Hand Surgery" in 2013. Univ-Doz. Dr. med. Sigurd Pechlaner in Medical University Innsbruck, is a founding member of the ÖGH, with main interest in wrist trauma, who edited "Atlas of Hand Surgery", awarded with "Pioneer of Hand Surgery" in 2017.

Hand surgeons in Austria performed successfully the bilateral hand transplantation in a patient who sustained a bilateral hand amputation by a bomb in Medical University Innsbruck in 2000.

The procedure was conducted at the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery led by Prof. Piza-Katzer and Trauma Surgery led by Doz. Pechlaner together with the Department of Visceral, Transplant and Thoracic Surgery led by Prof. Margreiter. In total four bilateral hand or forearm transplantations were performed thus far.

### **AUSTRIAN SOCIETY OF HAND SURGERY**

In 1959, the scientific literature meetings were established in Germany-mainly by Dieter Buck-Gramcko, which led to the foundation of the German speaking society of Hand Surgery (DAH - Deutschsprachige Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Handchirurgie) in 1965. Founding Members were Jörg Böhler, Dieter Buck-Gramcko, Walter Christ, Jürgen Geldmacher, Heinz Georg, Klaus Hellmann, Heinz Hoffmann, Hanno Millesi, Henry Nigst, Wolfgang Pieper, Wilhelm Schink, Claude Verdant, Albrecht Wilhelm, Gottlieb Zrubecki. These founders were hand surgeons from Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Evolving from the DAH, in 1990 the Austrian society for hand surgery (ÖGH - Österreichische Gesellschaft für Handchirurgie, [www.handchirurgen.at](http://www.handchirurgen.at)) was founded. Founding members were all austrian members of the DAH e.g. Hanno Millesi, Jörg Böhler, Heinz Kuderna, Sigurd Pechlaner, Andreas Pachucki and Emil Beck. The society started with 40 members and grew to a community of 283 members in 2017. The ÖGH is a member of the Federation of the European Societies for Surgery of the Hand (FESSH).