

Transforming Dermatology Group Practices with Digital Workflows



About Hautarztpraxis im Krohnstiegcenter

Hautarztpraxis im Krohnstiegcenter is owned by 4 Dermatologists and has 3 locations spread around the Hamburg area. They perform a wide range of medical and aesthetic treatments of both publicly insured and private patients. Their organization also has a strategic focus on tele-medical procedures, including remote teleconsultations.

Dermatology practices are experiencing an unprecedented amount of change over the last decade. With increased awareness of skin cancer and a shift to earlier diagnosis through screening programs, Dermatologists have seen an increase in demand for services. At the same time, the regulatory requirements and reimbursement structures have become more complex, making the management of dermatology practices more demanding.

Hautarztpraxis im Krohnstiegcenter, based in Hamburg, Germany, experienced these same challenges and has recently transformed the way they treat their patients by implementing the Demetra skin imaging platform. We interviewed Dr. Julia Märker-Strömer and Dr. Christian Müller at their practice in Hamburg to learn from their experience.

What were the main challenges you faced in running your group practice?

We put a strategic focus on telemedicine and collaboration between our clinicians to ensure our patients get the best quality care. Sharing of diagnostic procedures is very much a part of our daily routine. Our practices are spread across Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein and we did not have an integrating digital workflow, forcing us to have a more decentralized structure. This has caused us to suffer in three main areas: delayed exchange of information across practices, inability to capture and record all skin imaging data and inefficient communication between clinicians. All of this costs us time and money.

What are the main cost drivers for your practice?

Our main cost drivers are employees, administration and infrastructure. One of the key reasons for us to join individual practices into a group practice was to help share the administration and reduce overhead costs. However, we found that without a digital infrastructure platform, we were not able to be as efficient as we needed to be. Additionally, the changes in reimbursement policy are also going to have a negative impact, meaning that we will need to further improve our efficiency moving forward.

What other impact did the lack of digital infrastructure cause you?

We had to put in a huge investment in time to align the different locations from a management and process perspective. What we really needed was fast, centralized information access, shared diagnostic processes and an easy way to enable patient referrals across our practices.

//

We estimate that Demetra saves us approximately 1 ½ hours per day per clinician. With Demetra, we see very fast digital cooperation and communication.

//

Is that what led you to implement the Demetra Platform across your practices?

With Demetra, we have seen a big impact on how we perform Dermatoscopy and manage patients across our practices. We are able to take dermatoscopic images of a patient at any of our locations and provide immediate parallel access to all data sets and reports across the organization. We seamlessly share diagnostic processes, such as requesting a second opinion from a colleague. It has simplified patient referrals and allowed us to have a common diagnostic review process with our referrers such as GP's and hospitals. Overall, this has allowed us to significantly improve our efficiency.

What impact has this efficiency provided for your daily clinical practice?

As mentioned previously, with the way Dermatology practices have changed, efficiency is extremely important for us. We estimate that Demetra saves us approximately 1 ½ hours per day per clinician. With Demetra, we see very fast digital cooperation and communication for our three different locations. The location of where the image was taken is no longer a barrier and is immediately visible with all relevant clinical context to all clinicians within the practice. Seeing the same dermatoscopic patient images with internal and external healthcare providers enables a faster decision-making process and the ability to monitor suspect lesions over time.

How would you describe your experience with Demetra so far?

The Demetra team has been extremely responsive, supporting us in the implementation of the new workflows. Demetra provides us with high quality diagnostic dermatoscopic imaging across all of our locations. It has significantly improved our efficiency, helping us to make faster and better-informed diagnosis. It has helped us both improve our practice and the care we are able to provide to our patients.