

CENTRE FOR OCCUPATIONAL AND MARITIME MEDICINE, HAMBURG

Provided by Professor Volker Harth



The Hamburg Centre for Occupational and Maritime Medicine (Zentrum für Arbeitsmedizin und Maritime Medizin [ZfAM]) is an institution of the ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection (BJV) of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, connected with the Medical Faculty of the Hamburg University through the university professorship for occupational medicine and maritime medicine. The combination of occupational medicine polyclinic and 6 research working groups (Clinical Occupational Medicine, Epidemiology, Maritime Medicine, Mental Health, Public Health, Toxicology) offer ideal prerequisites for a successful interdisciplinary cooperation in research, teaching and patient care. The Institute is located in the St. Pauli Health Centre.

Responsibilities

The remit of the Institute is the performance of occupational scientific and medical investigations in order to increase knowledge about work-related adverse effects on human health. The Institute is responsible for basic and applied research, communicating health care methods and further training, academic lectures, the assessment of safety at work and hygiene, as well as the counselling of physicians, ministries, authorities, accident insurance claimants, local employees (including seafarers) and employer organizations.

In close cooperation with its clinical-experimental working groups, current research topics are taken up that arise from the constant change in the working world "on land and at sea". Thematically, the focus is on the development of workplace-related and at the same time public health-related prevention strategies, e.g. on the increasing absenteeism and early retirement due to mental stress and diseases or on health burdens caused by the increasing work intensification, the globalized commodity trade and new industries and technologies. In this context, the ZfAM draws on extensive expertise, but at the same time sets thematic priorities in newly established research projects, e.g. on the health effects of night and shift work and on quality-assured methods in the early diagnosis of occupational respiratory and lung diseases.

The Institute continues to deal in particular with research topics that have a Hamburg-specific connection, an example of which is the complex of topics "Psychomental stress in shipping". For the coastal states, the emerging technology sector of "offshore wind energy" poses a challenge to employee and workplace-related prevention, to which the institute contributes its expertise. The diagnostics of the "classical" chemical-irritative, toxic, carcinogenic and biological stresses also continue to be a focus at ZfAM. Cooperation with the UKE takes place within the framework of the Hamburg City Health Study (HCHS), for which ZfAM developed questions of occupational and environmental medicine in particular; involvement in the Centre for Health Care Research (CHCR), the UKE association for health care research, was also expanded.

History

In 1968, the Senate of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg converted the Extraordinariate into a full Chair of Occupational Medicine and created the Central Institute of Occupational Medicine (ZfA). Shipping Medicine was founded in 1966 as a department of the Bernhard Nocht Institute but was integrated into the ZfA in 2000 which was manifested with the renaming to the Central Institute for Occupational Medicine and Maritime Medicine (ZfAM) in 2007. In 2019, Prof. Harth's professorship was reassigned to occupational medicine and maritime medicine.

Current externally funded projects

- EU Horizon: Healthy Sailing – Prevention, mitigation, management of infectious diseases on cruise ships and passenger ferries (2022–2025)
- EU4Health: SOLACE: Strengthening the screening of Lung Cancer in Europe (2023–2026)
- EVALUNG – Evaluation and quality assurance in the extended screening programme of the German Social Accident Insurance for early detection of asbestos-related lung diseases using low-dose computed tomography (2021–2024)
- GerES VI – Analysis of pollutants in human samples as part of the German environmental study on adult health (2019–2024)
- Light and Shift – Intervention Study on Short- and Long-Term Health Effects of Dynamic Lighting at the Workplace (2020–2023)
- BEHAVIMS – Health Behaviour of persons with Multiple Sclerosis in Germany: Current status and development of supportive strategies for smoking cessation and dietary behaviour change (2022–2025)
- Prä-GiNa project – Prevention of violence and aggression towards staff in emergency departments (2021–2023)

Institute for Occupational and Maritime Medicine (ZfAM)

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The ZfAM in house 1 of the St. Pauli Health Centre, formerly known as the harbour hospital