

## ICU Volume 4 - Issue 2 - October 2004 - Country Focus: Germany

"Wendelsheim: In the Middle of Everywhere!"

Together with renowned researchers at the University of Tel Aviv in Israel, the German company AESKU is now on the trail of fresh possibilities for the diagnosis of autoimmune diseases.

Autoimmune diseases are diseases of the immune system, which can affect the entire body. While the immune system normally has the task of protecting the body against infections by producing antibodies to combat foreign bodies, autoimmune diseases lead – for reasons widely unexplained to date – to the production of so-called antibodies which turn against the body's own tissue.

Professor Yehuda Shoenfeld, the head of the internal medicine department, head of the Centre for Autoimmune Diseases at Tel Aviv University, and also holder of the world's first professorship for autoimmunity, and his colleague Miri Blank, head of the research laboratory, spent a 3-week research trip in Wendelsheim, Germany, conducting further research into the antiphospholipid syndrome, together with the AESKU team.

## **APS: From the Diagnosis to the Prognosis**

Antiphospholipid syndrome (APS) causes not only the typical changes in the skin, but can also cause venous and arterial cardiovascular problems, which lead to thromboses, neurological damage and to recurring spontaneous miscarriages.

With new forms of laboratory tests such as those being developed and produced by the company AESKU.DIAGNOSTICS on the basis of its own research, APS can now be successfully diagnosed. The consequences for the individual patient, however, cannot be predicted as yet.

The objective of the research activities, in cooperation with the Israeli working group, is to refine the test possibilities such that in the form of a prenatal screening, it's possible to give an early indication of whether a young woman with APS actually has the risk of miscarriage. The corresponding preventive measures can then be taken.

## Leading Edge on the Market Thanks to Corporate Structure and Location

A critical time factor in the development of new diagnostic methods is the networking between research, development and production. This is why the company AESKU has a unique corporate structure, uniting research into the development, therapy and diagnosis of autoimmune diseases under one roof. Three different divisions, each with their own particular focus – AESKU.DIAGNOSTICS, AESKU.THERAPY and AESKU.INSTITUTE – cover the interdisciplinary research, and the

development and production of the world's largest product range of innovative laboratory tests for the swift and secure diagnosis of autoimmune diseases. Research results can thus be implemented as innovative products remarkably quickly.

The ideal framework for the company's research activities, for product development and for further growth, is offered by the technology centre "Mikroforum" in Wendelsheim, Germany.

At the end of his research trip, Professor Shoenfeld corrected his first impression – "Wendelsheim", he said, "is not, as I initially thought, in the middle of nowhere, but rather in the middle of everywhere". Contact information: Matthias Torsten

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