

Brandenburgische
Technische Universität
Cottbus - Senftenberg



DEUTSCHE ARZT
MANAGEMENT GMBH



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GLA:D®

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Good Life with osteoArthritis in Denmark (GLA:D®)

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Technische Universität
Cottbus - Senftenberg

Authors

Andreas Glaubitz, Simone Napierala-Komp, Chiara Strunk,
Jeannine Hauke, Dr. Carolin Bahns, Prof. Dr. Christian Kopkow

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EDITORIAL

GLA:D® stands for “Good Life with osteoArthritis in Denmark” and was developed at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) in collaboration with researchers, clinicians, and patients. GLA:D® is an evidence-based therapy program for people with knee and hip osteoarthritis. The program is based on current scientific findings and international guidelines in the field of osteoarthritis therapy and is continuously evaluated and adapted. The core elements of GLA:D® include patient education and a guided exercise program. The goal is to promote patient self-management.

GLA:D® is now active in eleven countries. All participating countries are part of the GLA:D® International Network (GIN) and engage in regular exchange of current research findings to continuously further develop the GLA:D® program.

In the following annual report, you will find current information and research results on the status of GLA:D® in Germany.

By 2025, we have further established GLA:D® in Germany and have thus been able to significantly improve care for people with knee and hip osteoarthritis. Our network has grown significantly: we have recruited numerous new physicians and physical therapists for the program. In addition, we have presented GLA:D® at trade shows and conferences, raised its profile through television segments, and expanded our range of training courses and webinars.

We hope you enjoy reading the annual report!

Your GLA:D® Germany Team



Andreas Glaubitz
Projtlead GLA:D® Germany
Deutsche Arzt Management GmbH



Prof. Dr. Christian Kopkow
Research lead GLA:D® Germany
Brandenburgische Technische Universität
Cottbus-Senftenberg



Dr. Carolin Bahns
Researcher GLA:D® Germany
Brandenburgische Technische Universität
Cottbus-Senftenberg



Simone Napierala-Komp
Project management GLA:D® Germany
Deutsche Arzt Management GmbH



Chiara Strunk
Project management GLA:D® Germany
Deutsche Arzt Management GmbH



Jeannine Hauke
Project management GLA:D® Germany
Deutsche Arzt Management GmbH

WHAT IS GLA:D® ?

GLA:D® is an international, evidence-based program for patients with knee or hip osteoarthritis, developed in Denmark in 2013. Its goal is to implement international and national guidelines in clinical practice and thereby make a significant contribution to improving the quality of care for individuals with knee or hip osteoarthritis.

The GLA:D® concept is based on three components: a standardized two-day training for therapists, a structured program consisting of 18 therapy sessions for patients, and a GLA:D® data registry.

The collected data is continuously evaluated and published.

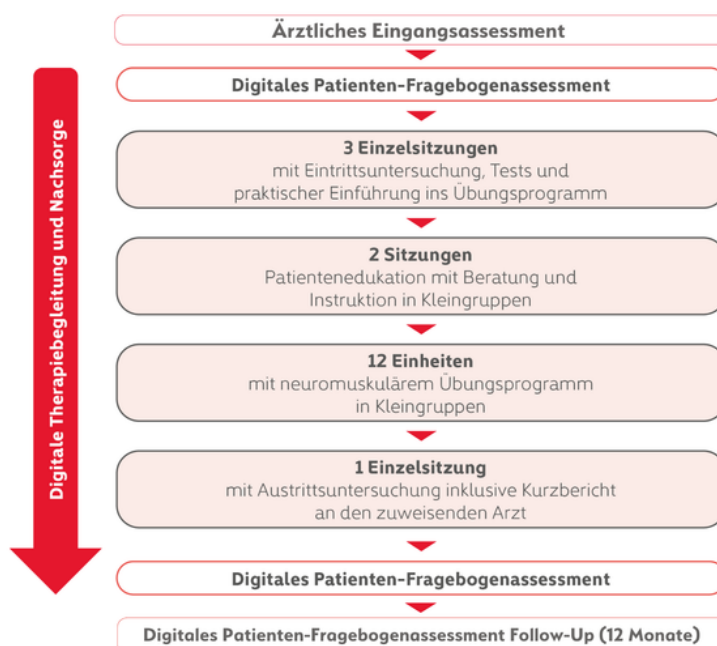


FIGURE 1: THE GLA:D® PROGRAM PROCESS

PARTICIPATION IN GLA:D® INCLUDES:

1. Three individual sessions including physical examination, functional tests, individual exercise level classification and registration in the national GLA:D® database.
2. Two educational sessions to provide comprehensive knowledge about osteoarthritis, risk factors, pain mechanisms, symptoms, recommendations for pain management, and disease coping strategies.
3. Six to eight weeks of supervised group training (two sessions per week).
4. A final individual session to repeat functional tests, provide individual evaluation and advise on continuing independent training.

ACCESS TO GLA:D®

Patients with knee and hip osteoarthritis can participate in GLA:D® through:

- Registration by general practitioners
- Registration by specialists
- Self-referral
- Referral through health insurance providers

AIMS OF GLA:D®

GLA:D® aims to implement international best practice guidelines in osteoarthritis care and

- to give all patients with knee and hip osteoarthritis equal access to high-quality, evidence-based treatment - regardless of where they live or their financial situation,
- to promote patient self-management and shared decision-making.

THE SPREAD OF GLA:D®

In the fall of 2021, 13 therapists were trained as GLA:D® Germany instructors by the SDU team during a two-day course. Only individuals trained by the Danish developers are authorized to offer the two-day course as continuing education for therapists.

This ensures that the content of patient education and exercise therapy is standardized across all GLA:D® providers.

In 2025, 8 GLA:D® courses were held in Germany to train a total of 158 physical therapists. Currently, GLA:D® is primarily offered by physical therapists. In the long term, the goal is to make GLA:D® available to other professional groups as well.



FIGURE 2: GLA:D® NETWORK GERMANY

By 2025, 36 physical therapy practices had joined the GLA:D® network. As a result, the network comprised a total of 142 therapy locations and 564 certified physical therapists in 2025 (see Figure 2).

In 2025, 47 new physicians joined, bringing the total number of physicians recruited to participate in the GLA:D® program to 237 by the end of 2025. Patients can use the network search at www.glad-deutschland.de to find the nearest GLA:D® network partner (medical practice or physical therapy practice) in their area (see Figure 3).

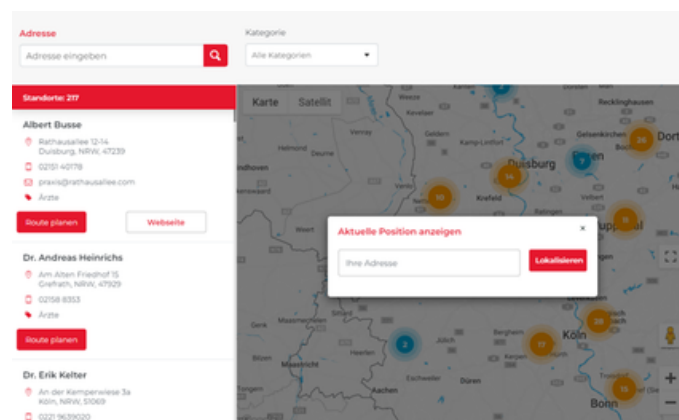


FIGURE 3: GLA:D® NETWORK SEARCH

PARTICIPATING HEALTH INSURANCE PROVIDERS

Following the launch of the partnership with **BARMER** in 2023, numerous other payers have been secured for the GLA:D® program in recent years. This positive trend continued in 2025:

In October 2025, BKK Braun Aesculap became another contractual partner of GLA:D®, enabling even more patients to participate in GLA:D® with full cost coverage.

All participating health insurance providers offer GLA:D® to individuals with knee and hip osteoarthritis with full cost coverage. GLA:D® is primarily offered in the pilot region of North Rhine-Westphalia, though the program is now represented throughout Germany with new contract partners.

NOVITAS BKK was the first health insurance provider to offer its members **nationwide** access to GLA:D®. In 2025, additional insurers joined the initiative to provide nationwide access to GLA:D® for their members (Figure 4).

For patients with knee or hip osteoarthritis who are not insured by any of the listed insurers, **participation on a self-pay basis** is also possible.

The goal for 2026 is to have additional health insurance providers cover the costs of GLA:D®.



FIGURE 4: CURRENTLY PARTICIPATING HEALTH INSURANCE PROVIDERS

WHO PARTICIPATES IN GLA:D®?

Since its launch in Germany, a total of 1,992 scheduled GLA:D® completion dates have been recorded in the GLA:D® registry as of the **end of 2025**.

PRESCRIPTION VOLUME

Since the program began, participating network physicians have issued a total of **3,343 GLA:D® prescriptions**. Of these, 2,151 patients have begun treatment at a participating GLA:D® physical therapy center.

In 2025, **1,313 GLA:D® prescriptions** were issued. This represents an increase of **111 prescriptions** compared to the previous year.

prescription issued		
2023	2024	2025
723	1202	1313

ASSIGNMENT STRUCTURE

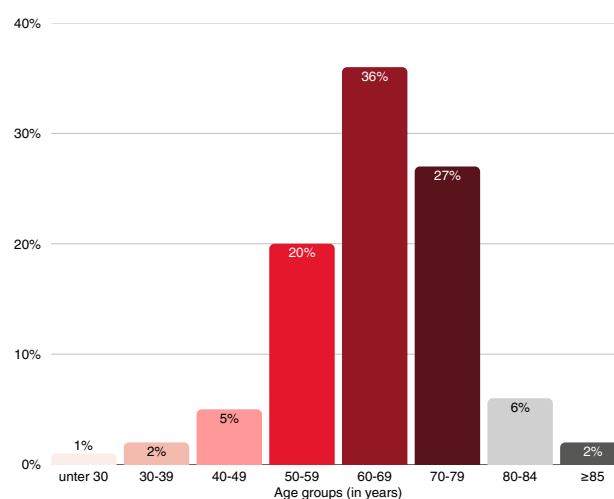
The data shows that **orthopedists** are the primary referrers for GLA:D®, accounting for **93%** of all referrals issued. Additional referrals are issued by general practitioners, rheumatologists, and other groups of specialists.

PATIENTS

The analysis focused exclusively on prescriptions issued to patients who had actually started the program to date.

Overall, the proportion of participating patients with **knee osteoarthritis (71%)** is significantly higher than the proportion of patients with **hip osteoarthritis (approx. 29%)**. In addition, more than 70% of participants in the GLA:D® program were women.

AGE STRUCTURE

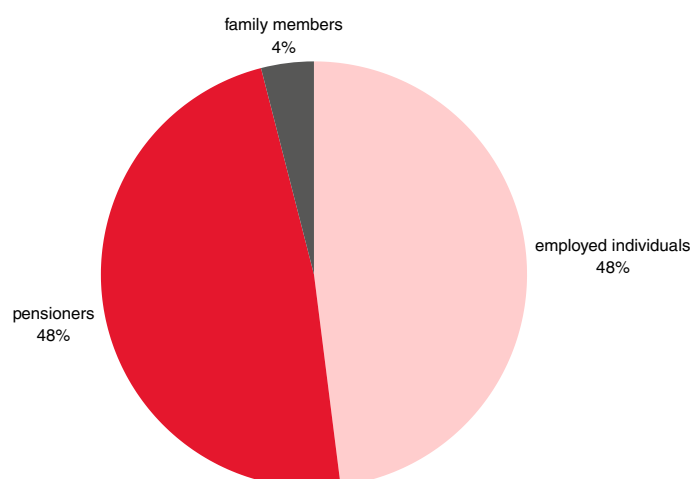


The average **age** of the participants was **65 years** (standard deviation, range).

About 30% of the participating patients are younger than 60 years old. Thus, the GLA:D® program also reaches a relevant group of patients in the early stages of the disease through the included ICD diagnoses of meniscus injuries, thereby offering the opportunity to counteract the progression of osteoarthritis at an early stage.

INSURANCE DATA

Based on the policyholder data, it can be seen that the breakdown between **retirees** and **working individuals** is approximately **50:50**.



knee 1537 Participants	hip 615 Participants
71 %	29 %

women 1631 Participants	men 518 Participants
76 %	24 %

SEVERITY OF OSTEOARTHRITIS

KELLGREN-LAWRENCE-SCORE

1 n = 172	2 n = 422	3 n = 900	4 n = 506	unknown n = 155
8 %	20 %	42 %	24 %	7 %

For the majority of patients, the **severity of osteoarthritis** was assessed using an **X-ray**. More than approximately **65%** of the patients participating in the GLA:D® program showed clearly visible joint changes (**Kellgren-Lawrence score ≥ 3**) and thus had advanced osteoarthritis.

GLA:D® is an active exercise program that is often prescribed even for patients with severe symptoms and it yields good results.

In particular, **patients with severe symptoms** are often already scheduled for **total joint replacement**, which can be successfully **delayed or even avoided** through the GLA:D® program.

RESULTS ACCORDING TO GLA:D®

For this annual report, data from all participants in the GLA:D® program up to **December 31, 2025**, were analyzed.

The analysis included both outcomes from **patient questionnaires** completed **3 and 12 months** after participating in the GLA:D® program, as well as **results** from functional tests (40-meter walk tests and 30-second chair stand tests) administered immediately before and after participation in the GLA:D® program.

BETTER PHYSICAL FUNCTION

GLA:D® increased **walking speed over a 40-meter distance by 2.25 seconds** (from 30.04 s to 27.79 s). This corresponds to a percentage improvement of approximately 7.5%.

The ability to **stand up from a chair and sit back down** as many times as possible also improved. Before participating in GLA:D®, there was an average of **11.9 standing-up movements** within 30 seconds; after completing the program, there were **14.3 standing-up movements**, which corresponds to an absolute improvement of more than 2 standing-up movements and a percentage **improvement** of approximately **20.2%**.

	3 months after GLA:D®
walking speed 	+ 8 %
leg strength 	+ 20 %

LESS PAIN

Patients who participated in the GLA:D® program reported a significant **reduction in pain**. Pain intensity was measured using a **visual analog scale (0–100 VAS)**. In patients with knee osteoarthritis, pain intensity decreased by an **average of 27% (53.3 to 39.1) after 3 months** and by **24% (53.3 to 40.7) 12 months after starting** the GLA:D® program. Patients with hip osteoarthritis showed a reduction in pain of **24% on average (53.7 to 40.6) after 3 months** and **35% (53.7 to 34.8) after 12 months**.

REDUCED PAIN MEDICATION INTAKE

Patients also benefited from the GLA:D® program in terms of **pain medication use**. On average, patients with **knee osteoarthritis took 23% less pain medication after 3 months** (52% vs. 40%).

This reduction in pain medication use persisted even after **12 months, with a 15% decrease in intake** (52% vs. 44%). Patients with **hip osteoarthritis** take an average of **20%** (55% vs. 44%) fewer painkillers 3 months after the program starts. The reduction in painkiller use remains constant at **20%** (55% vs. 44%) **even after 12 months**.

KOOS-12 AND HOOS-12

In addition, all patients participating in the GLA:D® program are administered the **Knee Injury and Osteoarthritis Outcome Score (KOOS)-12** or the **Hip Injury and Osteoarthritis Outcome Score (HOOS)-12** questionnaire before the program begins, as well as at follow-up visits after three and twelve months. For both the **KOOS-12** and the **HOOS-12**, patients showed improvements in **pain, function, and quality of life** after completing GLA:D®.

HIGHER QUALITY OF LIFE

Patients who participated in the GLA:D® program reported a **higher quality of life** related to health on average. Among **patients with knee osteoarthritis**, quality of life improved **by 26% after 3 months** (39.13 to 49.13). Even after **12 months**, the improvement remained at **24%** (39.13 to 48.41).

The average improvement in **joint-related quality of life** among patients with hip osteoarthritis was **15% after 3 months** (46.24 to 53.24) and persisted long-term **12 months** after GLA:D® with a **14%** improvement (46.24 to 52.59).

3 MONTHS AFTER GLA:D®

	knee	hip
pain VAS 	- 27 %	- 24 %
analgesics 	- 23 %	- 20 %
quality of life 	+ 26 %	+ 15 %

12 MONTHS AFTER GLA:D®

	knee	hip
pain VAS 	- 24 %	- 35 %
analgesics 	- 15 %	- 20 %
quality of life 	+ 24 %	+ 14 %

MILESTONES

BARMER AND GLA:D® GERMANY AGREE ON NATIONWIDE ROLLOUT – SUCCESSFUL PILOT PHASE IN NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA CONFIRMS EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONCEPT

Following the completion of a **two-year pilot phase** in **North Rhine-Westphalia** with consistently positive evaluation outcomes, the next milestone has been reached:

BARMER and GLA:D® Germany are jointly launching the nationwide rollout of the GLA:D® osteoarthritis program.

The analysis of data collected during the pilot phase demonstrates that the **GLA:D®** concept **reduces pain, improves mobility**, and can, in many cases, **prevent or delay surgical interventions**.

Implementation will begin on **January 1, 2026**, in **Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Bremen, Baden-Württemberg, and Bavaria (Cluster 1)**. The remaining federal states will follow in a phased approach:

Cluster 2 – starting **July 1, 2026**: Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg–Western Pomerania, Schleswig-Holstein

Cluster 3 – starting **January 1, 2027**: Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia

Cluster 4 – starting **July 1, 2027**: Hesse, Saarland, Rhineland-Palatinate

With nationwide implementation, GLA:D® will become an integral component of conservative osteoarthritis care in Germany.

The rollout is deliberately being implemented in regional clusters to meet growing demand while ensuring the establishment of a sufficient network of qualified GLA:D® therapists and stable organizational structures in each region.

We are pleased to have reached this major and important milestone through our work and would like to thank all network partners, **BARMER**, and all other participating payers for their collaboration.

In addition, **BKK Braun Aesculap** joined the GLA:D® program nationwide on **October 1, 2025**. This expansion provides even more patients with access to GLA:D® and enables them to benefit from our successful program.

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS FOR COMPREHENSIVE OSTEOARTHRITIS CARE

In **2025**, **GLA:D® Germany** succeeded in taking another decisive step toward the nationwide implementation of the osteoarthritis program through strengthened **collaboration** with the two major physiotherapy professional associations, **VPT – Association for Physiotherapy and Physio Deutschland**.

These partnerships extend far beyond formal cooperation. They provide the **foundation for quality assurance, nationwide training structures**, and the **sustainable integration of evidence-based osteoarthritis care** into physiotherapy practice.

The shared objective is to firmly establish evidence-based practice in routine care.

In order for this concept to be effective nationwide, strong professional policy and clinical partners are essential.

We aim to facilitate access to evidence-based continuing education for committed physiotherapists and to strengthen existing professional association structures.

GLA:D® SUCCESSFULLY RECOGNIZED AT THE MSD HEALTH AWARD

In 2025, GLA:D® Germany received two prestigious distinctions at the MSD Health Award.

The program was awarded second place by the expert jury and also won the 2025 Audience Award by a considerable margin, receiving the highest number of votes among all submitted projects.

This recognition highlights both the high professional quality and the nationwide relevance of GLA:D®. The success is largely attributable to the dedicated commitment of our network of physicians and therapists.

Continuous referrals, quality-assured implementation, and the ongoing development of the program form the foundation of this positive progress. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those involved for their collective efforts.

The award ceremony and the accompanying MSD Health Forum also provided an opportunity to present GLA:D® Germany to a broad professional audience and to strengthen dialogue with key stakeholders in the healthcare system.

As part of the event, GLA:D® Germany was presented and actively discussed through:

- Presentation of the program on the main stage
- Professional exchange with experts at the information booth
- Establishment of new contacts with health insurance providers and health policy decision-makers

The discussions held open up promising perspectives for the sustainable further development and stronger integration of the program into routine care.



FIGURE 4: CHIARA STRUNK, ANDREAS GLAUBITZ, AND SIMONE NAPIERALA-KOMP AT THE HEALTH FORUM IN MUNICH



FIGURE 5: ANDREAS GLAUBITZ, SIMONE NAPIERALA-KOMP, AND CHIARA STRUNK AT THE MSD HEALTH AWARD CEREMONY IN MUNICH

GLA:D® THERAPIST SURVEY

To assess the **effectiveness of the training** from the therapists' perspective, participants were invited to complete an online survey prior to the start of the two-day training (T0), two weeks after the training (T1), and one year after the training (T2).

In 2025, a total of 158 **new therapists** were trained. By the end of 2025, **564 therapists** had completed the GLA:D® training, of whom **492** participated in the initial **online survey** (**response rate: 87%**).

The respondents had a mean age of **37.8 years** (range: 21–70 years, standard deviation: 12.2), and **52.4%** were **female** (258/492). The average **professional experience** was 13.4 years (range: 0–55 years, standard deviation: 11.4).

The majority of participants reported holding a **state examination as their highest professional qualification** (344/492, **69.9%**), while **19.7%** (97/492) also held a **bachelor's degree**, **2.4%** (12/492) a diploma, **6.5%** (32/492) a master's degree, and **0.6%** (3/492) a doctoral degree. Most physiotherapists were working in **outpatient practice settings** (448/492, **91.1%**).



FIGURE 6: INSIGHTS INTO THE PRACTICAL COMPONENT OF THE GLA:D® THERAPIST TRAINING

The results of the **pre-post survey** indicate that participation in the GLA:D® training significantly **improves** therapists' **knowledge** and **confidence** in delivering **guideline-based treatment** for patients with knee and hip osteoarthritis (see Table 1).

Knowledge, Education and Ability	Vor Beginn der Schulung (T ₀) (n = 492)	2 Wochen nach Schulung (T ₁) (n = 157)
I know how to deliver exercise therapy and patient education for individuals with hip and/or knee osteoarthritis in accordance with current guideline recommendations.	368 (74,8 %)	155 (98,7 %)
I have been trained to deliver exercise therapy and patient education for individuals with hip and/or knee osteoarthritis in accordance with current guideline recommendations.	280 (56,9 %)	155 (98,7 %)
I am able to deliver exercise therapy and patient education for individuals with hip and/or knee osteoarthritis in accordance with current guideline recommendations.	344 (69,9 %)	156 (99,4 %)

Confidence	T ₀ (n = 492)	T ₁ (n = 157)
I am confident that I can deliver exercise therapy and patient education for individuals with hip and/or knee osteoarthritis in accordance with current guideline recommendations.	341 (69,3%)	155 (98,7 %)
I am confident that I can deliver exercise therapy and patient education for individuals with hip and/or knee osteoarthritis in accordance with current guideline recommendations, even when the patient is not motivated.	239 (48,6 %)	120 (76,4 %)

TABLE 1: RESULTS OF THE GLA:D® THERAPIST SURVEY
NOTE: UNPAIRED PRE-POST COMPARISON (LOSS TO FOLLOW-UP: 68.1%)

PUBLIC RELATIONS

This year, the GLA:D® Germany team was once again represented at key health policy and scientific congresses.

The aim was to further enhance the visibility of the GLA:D® program, present current evaluation results, and strengthen the interdisciplinary network of physiotherapists, physicians, and other partners.

The activities began with the **Federal Managed Care Congress (BMC)**, which took place on **January 28 and 29 in Berlin**.

There, we used the platform to position GLA:D® as a structured, evidence-based approach within the context of innovative care models and cross-sectoral collaboration.

The international kick-off was marked by the **Osteoarthritis Research Society International (OARSI) World Congress on Osteoarthritis**, held from **April 24 to 27 in South Korea**.

At this event, the GLA:D® Germany team presented current findings from routine care in Germany to an international expert audience and contributed to the scientific exchange on conservative osteoarthritis management.



FIGURE 7: PROJECT LEAD ANDREAS GLAUBITZ AT THE VSOU CONGRESS IN BADEN-BADEN

From **May 1 to 3**, we were represented at the Annual Meeting of the **Association of South German Orthopaedists and Trauma Surgeons (VSOU) in Baden-Baden**.

In addition to our presence within the congress environment, we delivered expert presentations on the GLA:D® program and presented current findings from routine care in Germany.

The professional exchange with orthopaedic surgeons and trauma specialists once again provided valuable impulses for the further development and stronger integration of the program into medical care.

As in previous years, GLA:D® Germany was also represented at the **German Congress for Orthopaedics and Trauma Surgery (DKOU)**, which took place from **October 28 to 31 in Berlin**. Here, we presented current data on the effectiveness and implementation of the program within the German healthcare context and engaged in numerous discussions with potential network partners.

Other important events included the German Congress for Health Services Research (DKVF), held from September 22 to 24, 2025, in Hamburg, where two poster presentations on the GLA:D® project were presented, as well as the **Physiotherapy Research Symposium (FSPT) in Bremen from November 21 to 22, 2025**.

Through continuous participation in health policy-relevant congresses and major professional conferences, the visibility of GLA:D® Germany was further increased and the nationwide network sustainably expanded.



FIGURE 9: ANDREAS GLAUBITZ, DR. CAROLIN BAHNS, AND PROF. DR. CHRISTIAN KOPKOW AT THE FSPT IN BREMEN



FIGURE 10: INCHEON, SOUTH KOREA



FIGURE 8: PROF. DR. CHRISTIAN KOPKOW AND DR. CAROLIN BAHNS AT THE OARS CONGRESS IN INCHEON, SOUTH KOREA

GLA:D® INTERNATIONAL NETWORK



FIGURE 11: GLA:D® INTERNATIONAL NETWORK WITH ALL PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

NEWS

The **GLA:D® International Network** was **established in 2018** and now includes numerous countries that have successfully implemented the Danish program.

In **2025**, the network was further expanded with the launch of **GLA:D® Netherlands**, and international exchange was intensified.

GLA:D® is currently offered internationally to individuals in **Denmark, Canada, Australia, China, New Zealand, Switzerland, Austria, Norway, the Netherlands, Finland, Germany, and Ireland.**

GIN MEETING 2025

The international GLA:D® network meeting once again brought together representatives from all partner countries and provided an important platform for professional exchange.

Within this context, best practice approaches were shared and country-specific adaptations of the program were further developed collaboratively.

At the same time, the meeting marked an organizational transition: in Denmark, new responsibilities within the program leadership were defined, as co-founder Ewa Roos is gradually stepping back from day-to-day operations in anticipation of her forthcoming retirement.

For 2026, plans include further expanding the global data pool and generating cross-country insights to support evidence-based osteoarthritis care.

OUTLOOK AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

In the coming year, the GLA:D® Germany team will focus on **nationwide training courses** that are part of the program's rollout. The aim is to recruit new therapists for the evidence-based GLA:D® concept and to strengthen the provision of care for patients with knee and hip osteoarthritis across Germany. The training sessions will take place at several central locations throughout Germany, including:

- **March 21–22, 2026**, in **Ulm** at the VITREA Rehabilitation Center
- **April 20–21, 2026**, in **Laatzten** at the VPT North-West Regional Group
- **May 4–5, 2026**, in **Munich** at the Physio Academy
- **June 25–26, 2026**, in **Berlin** at the Physio Deutschland headquarters
- **July 2–3, 2026**, in **Bad Birnbach** at the VPT vocational school
- **October 19–20, 2026**, in **Hoppegarten** at the VPT headquarters

In addition, the team will once again be represented at selected scientific and professional congresses, including the **74th Annual Meeting of the Association of South German Orthopaedists and Trauma Surgeons (VSOU)**, taking place from April 16 to 18, 2026, in **Baden-Baden**, as well as the **German Congress for Orthopaedics and Trauma Surgery (DKOU)**, scheduled for **October 20 to 23, 2026**, in **Berlin**.

A particular highlight will be the **10th Physiotherapy Research Symposium (FSPT)**, held on November 27 and 28, 2026, at the **Health Campus of Bochum University of Applied Sciences**. This event brings together physiotherapy research and clinical practice and provides a platform for interdisciplinary exchange.

At the same time, GLA:D® Germany is engaged in promising discussions with additional payers, including IKK classic and Deutsche Bank BKK. Furthermore, ongoing dialogues are being conducted with statutory and occupational health insurance providers in order to continuously expand access to evidence-based GLA:D® care and to make it available to a growing number of patients with knee and hip osteoarthritis.



FIGURE 12: PROSPECTIVE PARTNERS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE GLA:D® SELECTIVE CONTRACT IN 2026: BKK DEUTSCHE BANK AND IKK CLASSIC



FIGURE 13: ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH GERMAN ORTHOPAEDISTS AND TRAUMA SURGEONS (VSOU) IN BADEN-BADEN



FIGURE 14: PHYSIOTHERAPY RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM (FSPT) AT THE HEALTH CAMPUS OF BOCHUM UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



WWW.GLAD-DEUTSCHLAND.DE

CONTACT

E-Mail:

INFO@GLAD-DEUTSCHLAND.DE

Website GLA:D® Germany:

[HTTPS://GLAD-DEUTSCHLAND.DE](https://GLAD-DEUTSCHLAND.DE)

Website GLA:D® International:

WWW.GLADINTERNATIONAL.ORG

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