INTRODUCTION: Advances in conventional vascular surgery, endovascular procedures and conservative treatment require close interdisciplinary cooperation. The term Vascular Centre indicates to patients and referring doctors optimal professional and organisational competence. METHODS: 73 applications by vascular centres for certification were made between June 2002 and December 2005, of which after audit 54 were successful for three years, including one centre each in Austria and Switzerland. 13 centres were not accepted and six are still under consideration. This analysis is based on the data of 52 certified centres in the Federal Republic of Germany. RESULTS: A mean of 1149 patients were hospitalized in these centres per year (12 % emergency admissions) and 2159 patients per year were treated as outpatients, 60 % with arterial vascular disease. All centres have vascular surgery and radiology department, 10 of the 52 centres cooperate with specialists in private practice to provide an angiology service. A mean of 460 arterial vascular operations and 239 arterial interventional procedures were performed at each centre annually. In addition there were operations for varicose veins (n = 217), shunt operations (n = 58) and major amputations (n = 42). Inpatient or outpatient conservative treatment (for peripheral vascular disease, diabetic foot syndrome, phlebothrombosis or
chronic venous insufficiency) was given to a mean of 338 patients annually. CONCLUSIONS: Certification of interdisciplinary vascular centres provides structural and medical data and the beginnings of comparing such centres. A future task will be standardization of documentation and continuing assessment of the quality of results.