



**Life Science Medical University  
(International Medical School)  
– The Concept  
20 11 2009**

Initiated and submitted by the *New European Surgical Academy* (NESA) and the *Institute for Preventive Health and Nutritional Science* (IGEB) in cooperation with Life Science GmbH at the Danube University of Krems, Austria.

**I. Preliminary ideas:**

Despite of globalization and free access to the internet and medical literature, medical science is still dominated by local traditions. There are several examples where evidence-based procedures are not yet practiced. The recent technical developments have led to major progress but also to a trend among young doctors to highly specialize and concentrate on limited fields. With few exceptions, the classical image of the doctor as a cultured polymath is outdated. This is due, inter alia, to the enormous information overload medical students have to face, which brings them to focus on the technical rather than humanistic aspects of their studies, but also to the selection criteria applied in the admission of students to medical schools.

International cooperation concerning various aspects of medical science, as it is realized, for instance, by the working group of the *New European Surgical Academy* (NESA), has proven that inter- and intra-cultural cooperation may be mutually enriching. Linking institutions based in different countries and even on different continents resulted within a year in the development of several common concepts, methods, instruments and standards as well as common publications – an output much more extensive than what might have been accomplished in research done by each single institution on its own. One of the results was that the principles of evidence-based surgery were

accepted in several academic and non-academic hospitals, which were convinced to adopt optimized operative methods and enabled their controlling and certification by international teams appointed by the NESAs.

**II. Aims:** The *Life Science Medical University* is supposed to be an inter- and intracultural medical school with the aim of educating talented persons who possess a humanistic philosophy, personal integrity and the ability of critical analysis. The curriculum will be based upon the most recent evaluated findings of evidence-based facts. The students are supposed to develop trans-cultural competence as well as the readiness of international cooperation, to become acquainted with different cultures and philosophies and, after graduating, to integrate themselves in an international and interdisciplinary network.

**III. Conception:** The initiators of this project are Dr. med. Werner Seebauer, head of the Swiss-based *Institute for Preventive Health and Nutritional Science* (IGEB), and Prof. Dr. med. Michael Stark, the President of the *New European Surgical Academy* (NESA). Dr. Seebauer aims at creating a network of specialists from diverse areas to facilitate interdisciplinary cooperation in various fields of preventive health care. The NESA was founded in 2004 with the aims to evaluate and optimize surgical procedures on the basis of evidence-based principles, to introduce new operative methods and to simplify processes in the Public Health Sector. Furthermore, the NESA deals with the transfer of surgical know-how to countries with limited resources and promotes interdisciplinary measures leading to the optimization of surgical procedures.

**IV. European Background:** Until the foundation of the European Union, doctors were able to work solely in countries for which they had a licensure, depending on the respective national regulations. In 1999, the Bologna Agreement stipulated the construction of a “European Higher Education Area” by 2010, which means that academic titles acquired in any EU country will most probably be recognized in all of them. The opportunity is given now to use this in order to comprise excellence in networks, thus creating synergies.

Each medical university in the EU has accomplished excellence in certain preclinical or clinical areas. For the first time students will have the opportunity to benefit from this excellence altogether. The curriculum will be planned, centralized and certificated by the NESAs and its partners. In order to implement this suggested concept, cooperation agreements will be signed with diverse universities and hospitals in Germany and other EU countries, such as Bulgaria (Sofia), Poland (Breslau), the Netherlands (Rotterdam), Belgium (Antwerp), Denmark (Copenhagen), and Italy (Rome). The students will be offered concentrated time-limited courses in different academic institutions. In addition to the transfer of professional knowledge, this will enhance cultural exchange and facilitate the establishment of contacts necessary for the students' further professional careers.

**V. Curriculum:** The duration of the course of studies will be 6 years, of which 3 years are envisioned for preclinical studies (medical history, psychology, different aspects of sociology, philosophy and interreligious sciences, informatics, statistics and epidemiology, literature research, physics, chemistry, biochemistry, biology, anatomy, physiology, histology, pathology, genetics), 2 ½ years for clinical studies, and ½ year for studying alternative and complementary medicine. The curriculum will be decided upon by an interdisciplinary team which is to be appointed by the founding committee. English will be the language applied in lessons, examinations, and communication.

**VI. Profile of the Candidates:** The candidates are expected to possess 'human' qualities such as patience and devotion as well as emotional intelligence. Preferably, they have already finished a course of studies in any other discipline. They should show interest in cultural aspects and possess a higher-than-average intelligence. They should actively identify themselves with the concept of the *Life Science Medical University*. After graduating they should show readiness to work in countries with limited resources for a certain period of time or periodically and to transfer the knowledge acquired. The founding committee will determine the precise admission criteria and processes.

**VII. Logistics:** In the first years the courses of the *Life Science Medical University* should be open to a limited number of up to 20 participants, which will allow the establishment of personal contacts despite of the limited resources, thus building and

enhancing the reputation of the university. In the first three years, the hosting institutions will provide dormitories for the participants during the concentrated courses. The clinical studies will be carried out mainly but not only in German hospitals, and the graduates' licensures will also be issued in Germany, although other countries are possible. In the first three years, the staff of the *Life Science Medical University* could be provided through the cooperation of the IntraG and the NESAs, which will provide the fundamental structures.

**VIII. Financing:** The *Life Science Medical University* should be financed by different sponsors such as medical or pharmaceutical industries. Finances should be supplied via the NESAs and the involved institutions applying for third-party funds. As it is an EU project and the graduates are expected to be ready to represent European interests in developing countries, the EU will be approached for partial financing. Further resources should be provided by the diverse national Health Ministries, by financial institutes, industry, foundations, WHO, and individual sponsors as well as by the tuition fees.

**IX. Conclusion:** The NESAs are about to check the possibility of founding an international medical school based on new principles and functioning as its supporting organization.

**Prof. Dr. Michael Stark**

**Prof. Dr. med. Werner Seebauer**