

## **International Medical School (IMS)**

### **The Concept**

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Initiated and submitted by the *New European Surgical Academy* (NESAs) and the *Institute for Preventive Health and Nutritional Science* (IGEB)

#### **I. Preliminary ideas:**

Despite 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 With few exceptions, the classical image of the doctor as a cultured polymath is outdated.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* (NESAs), 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 scientific 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 operations devised by the NESAs, such as the modified and optimized caesarean section or the ten-step vaginal hysterectomy, were accepted in

several academic and non-academic hospitals, which adopted these optimized operative methods and enabled their controlling and certification by teams appointed by the NESAs.

**II. Aims:** The *International Medical School* is supposed to be an inter- and intracultural medical school with the aim of educating talented persons who possess personal integrity, a humanistic philosophy, and the ability of critical analysis. The curriculum will be based upon the most recent evaluated findings of evidence-based studies. 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 initiation of the International Medical School comes from the *New European Surgical Academy* (NESA), which 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. The NESA has members in 48 countries. The IMS project is supported by opinion leaders in various fields, such as medical educator Prof. Hilliard Jason from Denver, USA, and Prof. Werner Seebauer, head of the Swiss-based *Institute for Preventive Health and Nutritional Science* (IGEB), who aims at creating a network of specialists from diverse areas to facilitate interdisciplinary cooperation in various fields of preventive health care.

**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 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 Poland (Breslau), the Netherlands (Rotterdam), Belgium (Antwerp), and Italy (Rome and Perugia). 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, which next to clinical studies will include medical history, psychology, different aspects of sociology, philosophy and interreligious sciences, informatics, statistics and epidemiology, literature research, physics, chemistry, biochemistry, biology as well as anatomy, physiology, histology, pathology, genetics, which will be integrated in the clinical studies right from the first year. The curriculum will be decided upon by an interdisciplinary team which was appointed by the founding committee. The language of the IMS will be English. Students will be able, and even encouraged, to move between institutions and countries.

**VI. Profile of the Candidates:** The candidates are expected to possess 'humane' 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 *International Medical School*. 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 *International Medical School* should be open to a limited number of students, which will allow the establishment of

personal contacts despite of the limited resources, thus building and enhancing the reputation of the IMS. In the first three years, the hosting institutions will provide dormitories for the participants during the concentrated courses. The IMS headquarters will be in Berlin, Germany.

**VIII. Preparations:** The first step will be “teaching the teachers”. As most of the teaching staff in existing universities adhere to traditions and as the IMS concept is completely different (exposure to clinical studies from the beginning), the teachers will have to be defined, evaluated and trained in concentrated courses.

The accreditation committee will define hospitals and departments which are centres of excellence and have a motivated staff. These departments do not necessarily have to be university hospitals but have to function according to evidence-based knowledge.