How can we secure international experience for medical students? - Erasmus and beyond

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Internationalization is not only a buzzword on everyone’s lips it is also a necessity for all our students seeking a career in nearly all professions. How do we provide international opportunities that will enable our students to gain this important knowledge of cultural sensitivity and insight needed for a future in health professions?

Is it enough to send a limited number of students abroad for a semester? Internationalisation of the curricula is becoming increasingly important in a rapidly changing world. On European level Erasmus+ has for long been instrumental in supporting this process. How well are we doing with student exchanges for students enrolled in health sciences and medicine? Can Erasmus+ support the international experience we wish to provide our students? With close contact with patients and diploma lead educations this is a challenge to many institutions.

This lecture will present the structure of Erasmus+ with both its limitations and possibilities for medical degrees. It will bring up to discussion the differences in Erasmus practice and Erasmus theory and how these two options can be used for health science and medical students. In addition the lecture will discuss how we can reach internationalisation of our curriculum for students studying health sciences and medical degree and alternative measurement and activities will be presented. Thus International student mobility is very important, it reaches only a few. Therefore we need to visualize and increase other international activities that can be rewarded equally to mobility.

Lund University in Sweden has developed a concept of a measurable international merits certificate. Throughout the study period students receive recognition for the participation in a wide range of activities, including student exchange, mentoring, international symposiums, conference etc. The concept was initially developed at the Faculty of Medicine at Lund University, Sweden in order to find ways of achieving the strategic goals of internationalization with limited opportunities to exchange students. It has now been implemented in several other institutions in Scandinavia. The concept of a certificate of international merits as a complement to Erasmus exchanges will be shared during the lecture including the process and thoughts behind the work.