

**Report Open meeting  
Special Interest Group Health Internationalization (SIG-HI)  
EAIE conference, Basel, September 15, 2006**

*Present*

Marie-Luise Unterberger	Austria
Janet Conroy	Australia
Luc Simoens; Marc Velghe	Belgium
Christine Loy (SIG-HI board member)	Germany
Simone Hoogakker (SIG-HI board member); Maria Nijenhuis (SIG-HI board member); Ramon Puras; Janine Res; Margit Sivirsky	The Netherlands
Borghild Roald	Norway
Ulrike Kylberg; Lena Nydén; Christina Sylwander	Sweden

*Background*

In the Netherlands, the international coordinators of the 8 medical faculties get together twice a year to exchange experiences. On a European level there are several forums for medicine but all of them tend to be more about curriculum development than about practical things. This gave the idea to raise a new forum. The EAIE seemed to be a good platform for this since it has a lot of members and an excellent organized conference each year.

At the EAIE Conference in Turin in 2004 the Special Interest Group Health Internationalisation (SIG-HI) was launched. Although many other networks in international health exist, these all tend to be monodisciplinary. The SIG-HI wants to be multidisciplinary, handling topics that are general in health internationalization. It wants to be being a platform for exchanging best practices/bad experiences between disciplines of one kind, between disciplines of different kinds as well as broadening exchange possibilities in the mono disciplinary field and the multidisciplinary field.

The binding factor of the participants in SIG-HI are the patients/clients. This element makes exchange between universities more difficult/challenging. Another key factor in the SIG-HI is that it is not limited to only one specific field but that all disciplines in health are welcome to participate. These are for instance:

- Medicine
- Biomedical Sciences
- Dentistry
- Veterinary
- Nursing
- Physiotherapy
- Obstetrics
- Nutritional Health
- Occupational Therapy
- Radiation Therapy
- Public Health

etc.

### *Activities so far*

After the Open Meeting in Turin in 2004, the board members of SIG-HI sent out two questionnaires to the SIG-HI members and other people in their network. This resulted in two sessions at the EAIE Conference in Krakow in 2005: one on networks and one on insurance.

This year in Basel there is scheduled an Open Meeting, another session (4.04) on networks where three specific networks will be explained in more detail, and a session (8.06) on several topics related to internationalisation in health profession education.

SIG-HI also set up a page on the EAIE website and composed and maintains an address book of SIG-HI members and other persons interested in the SIG.

### *Future activities*

In order to organise future activities we ask for input from the people present at the open meeting. It appears that there seems to be a need to pay more attention to policy and strategy of internationalisation in the field of health internationalisation. A theme could be: 'from strategy and politics to practice'. Other topics that are mentioned: curriculum comparison and assessment of competences in relation to quality assurance.

With this input the SIG-HI board has decided to plan the following activities at next years EAIE Conference in Trondheim:

- *Open Meeting*  
During the Open Meeting the background of the SIG will be explained, as well as the activities thus far. The audience will be able to raise actual topics for discussion, or ask questions to all persons present. Possible topics to be studied by the SIG can be raised by participants of the SIG HI Open Meeting.
- *Session: English courses in health professions education: from policy to practice*  
English is not often used as the language for education in health professions education institutes. The main reason for this seems to be that students are trained for professions where they deal with patients and clients who speak the native language. Teaching in English therefore doesn't seem necessary. This however makes student exchange very difficult. In this session 2-3 speakers will tell about the process of setting up an English course in their health curriculum in order to stimulate student exchange. They will talk about the politics involved to set up this policy and how this policy is put into practice.
- *Session: Quality assurance of practical internships in health education by standardised assessment*  
How do you assure the quality of internships abroad? Two best practices from the field of health education will illustrate how standardised assessment will guarantee the quality of students' practical internships, at home as well as abroad.
- *Session: Networks in the health professions education field*  
Several networks are active within the health professions education field. During the EAIE conference in Kraków (2005) an overview was given of a number of these networks and in Basel (2006) three networks were illustrated in more detail. Because of the success of this session it will be repeated this year in Trondheim with three other networks.