

Germany's Medicine on a legal way to Bologna: stony but manageable



Hartmut Riehn^{1,2}, Manfred Gross², Jörg Pelz²

¹Vorsitzender Richter am VG a.D., Rechtsanwalt der Charité

² Prodekanat Studium und Lehre, Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany

Introduction

Medical education is strongly regulated by different laws. The Treaty of Rome declares that member states are responsible for the specific conditions for taking up a profession within their national territory. Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament regulates the (minimal) standards of basic medical education for both duration and content. The German Ministry of Health is responsible for the Medical Licensure Act (ÄApprO) which regulates and specifies broadly content of teaching and assessment of student's qualifications necessary for receiving the license to practice medicine by the state. The basic framework of qualification of the Bologna-Process awarding a Bachelor's or a Master's degree is not regulated in any legal document relevant for medical education.

Concept

There is no imperative to establish the Bologna-Process in the medical curriculum for Germany's faculties.

-Medical faculties can make use of the 'model-clause' (§ 41 ÄApprO) which provides them with a relative academic freedom, especially they get rid of the M1 exam.

-Medical faculties organise the curriculum in modules; teaching is interdisciplinary covering basic sciences and clinical sciences right from the beginning.

-To become licensed as a physician medical students have to pass the state exam after 6 years of studies – faculties embed at the end of 6th and 10th semester the possibility to acquire facultative a university degree, Bachelor and/or Master respectively.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Voluntary participation of students in the Bachelor or Master projects may lead to poor attendance, but students who find out that medicine is foreign to their nature can receive a degree, which opens perspectives for further studies or direct employment. This prevents superfluous educational activity and guarantees meaningful output.

Students who enter the workforce at that point may not be properly prepared.

Teaching without involvement of a significant amount of clinical issues right from the beginning leads to problems with the number of students which have to be enrolled.

It may be easier to move from one country to another for further study.

One possible way to Bologna for Germany's medical faculties

The Legal Framework

Treaty of Rome

Member states responsible for regulation of specific conditions for taking up a profession within national territory

Directive 2005/36/EC

Medical education duration: 6 years, 5500 hours and content: knowledge of the sciences on which medicine is based understanding structure, function and behaviour of healthy and sick persons; adequate knowledge of clinical disciplines and practices, suitable clinical experience

Medical Licensure Act (ÄApprO)

Content – Assessment – Evaluation – State Exam - License

No regulation of the implementation of the Bologna-Process in Medical Education

Auxiliary construction:

Model-Curriculum according to § 41 ÄApprO
Relative freedom to implement a Bologna oriented curriculum

Facultative university degrees Bachelor and Master

6th semester provide an opportunity to receive **Bachelor's degree**

10th semester provide an opportunity to receive **Master's degree**

12th semester state exam – only possibility to be licensed as a **physician**

Conclusions

Given the existing laws in Germany there is a way to implement the Bologna-Process in medical education. The current proposal is an auxiliary construction and should not become a permanent solution. If politicians mean business with the implementation of the Bologna-Process in medical education they have to start a new legislative process.

It is possible to implement the Bologna-Process in the medical curriculum without changing the currently existing laws