

NIHES and Erasmus University Medical Center Rotterdam celebrate new Masters and Doctors in medical and health-science research

Rotterdam, the Netherlands – September 2, 2011

At its 2011 Graduation Ceremony on September 2, the Netherlands Institute for Health Sciences (NIHES) celebrated 86 graduates in medicine and the health sciences. The graduates came from 17 countries, and included 23 participants in ERACOL, an EU-funded Partnership Programme supported by six universities in Latin America and five in Europe. NIHES and ERACOL are both led by Erasmus University Medical Center Rotterdam.



NIHES Science Director Prof. Albert Hofman, MD, PhD:

“Today’s graduates will embark on international careers as researchers, executives and advisors in the health sciences. Whatever their field – clinical medicine, drug research, public health or health-policy development – our graduates all serve one overarching interest: people’s health. Our work has three main objectives: to help identify the determinants of health and disease, to find factors that contribute to the efficiency of health services, and to further develop methods for acquiring and interpreting medical data. In the years ahead, important discoveries will be made in the medical sciences. Some of them will be made by NIHES partner institutes, who are now conducting a huge

amount of strategic medical research. At NIHES, we are proud to help such talented health professionals realize their highest ambitions and we applaud our alumni with their great accomplishments."

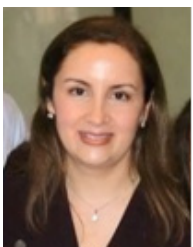


Huibert Pols, Professor of Internal Medicine, Dean and Vice-Chairman of the Executive Board of Erasmus University Medical Center Rotterdam:
"With 23 nationalities, the NIHES Graduation has become a true melting pot of cultures – students with one joint passion, to follow the path of science. I have no doubt that the 86 students who are graduating today are part of a next generation of medical doctors, scientists, policy makers and advisors in the health sciences, who will be able to make a difference, each in their own way, country, or region.

By doing so, you will make a positive contribution to international health. Young people should discover and use their talents, and this is just what you did. I wish you great success with your careers, and that you will dare to distinguish yourselves!"

In total, twenty-six of this year's graduates emerged from Project ERACOL (Erasmus-Columbus 2013). Run with EU funding under the Erasmus Mundus Partnership Programme, this project focuses on Colombia, Costa Rica and Panama, and is part of a wider programme fostering collaboration between a consortium of higher education institutions in EU Member States and third countries. Its mobility scheme promotes exchanges of students and academic staff between Europe and designated Latin American countries for purposes of study, teaching, training and research.

Led by Erasmus University Medical Center Rotterdam, the consortium represents universities whose research training in medicine and the health sciences ranks them among the world's best. Its European members are Karolinska Institutet, Sweden; Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium; Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain; and the University of Torino, Italy. Its Latin American members are Universidad Autónoma de Centro América, Costa Rica; Universidad de Costa Rica; Universidad de Panamá; Universidad Latina de Panamá; Universidad del Cauca, Colombia; and Universidad del Rosario, Colombia.



Mónica Ortegón, Researcher and Docent, School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universidad del Rosario, Colombia, and ERACOL coordinator for Latin America:
"Feedback from ERACOL students from Colombia, Costa Rica, and Panama shows that 23 leaders emerged in different research areas. As drivers of scientific knowledge, they will contribute to the development of our countries. I thank Erasmus MC Rotterdam for shaping the future of these scientific leaders."



Hanneke Teekens, Director and Member of the Board of the Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education, and representative of the Erasmus Mundus National Structure:
"Your new diploma is something that you can share around the world. For health knows no national boundaries, and problems can be solved only if we solve the problems that national boundaries create, as well as the boundaries within disciplines and between people. I am delighted that the support of many countries in Europe and Latin America helped ERACOL to flourish. We now hope that future programmes will

test and implement the ideas it developed. I wish you all a bright future and thank NIHES once again for being the leader in such an excellent programme, which sets an example for other Erasmus Mundus programmes."



Antonio Dimat  Cardenas, Minister Plenipotentiary, Embassy of Colombia to the Netherlands:

"On behalf of the Embassy of Colombia, I would like to express our gratitude to Erasmus University Rotterdam and the Netherlands Institute for Health Sciences, as well as to all the other institutions which have made the Erasmus Mundus Partnership Programme ERACOL become reality. A year ago, we were here in Rotterdam to welcome the students whose scholarships enabled them to undertake studies in different fields of the health sciences. Today, we are proud to see that 17 students from Colombia have received their diplomas from Erasmus University Medical Center Rotterdam. I am confident that each of you will make a strong personal contribution to the development of medicine and health in our country, to serve the purposes emphasized by ERACOL. Congratulations on behalf of the Embassy of Colombia and of the Government of Colombia."



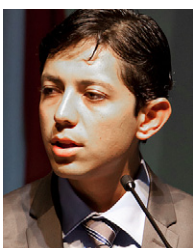
Gustavo Campos – Fallas, Minister Counsellor, Embassy of Costa Rica to the Netherlands:

"Health matters, and also young people matter. For Costa Rica, education is one of the most important pillars of development. It is our weapon against the enemy. But what is the enemy? The enemy is ignorance and our weapons are used to fight the lack of development. So, be proud: you are building the future. On behalf of the Ambassador of Costa Rica and the Republic of Costa Rica, we congratulate all the students graduating today."



Ira Natasha Roner Arauz, Consul General of Panama:

"On behalf of my country, I would like to congratulate Mrs Saavedra Perez on her diploma. Her contribution to the development of Panama will be of great benefit to our community. I am grateful to NIHES for keeping their focus on Panama. I hope, in the years to come, more Panamanian professionals, like Mrs Saavedra Perez, will be given the chance to participate in your programmes."



Jos  Andr s Calvache Espa a of Universidad del Cauca.

In his student address, he said: "For me, the Master of Science in the Health Sciences represents much more than a degree. It represents a lifestyle and a new way of looking at my career. With criticism and the desire to move one step ahead every day. Remember that research is like a growing child. It changes daily, and if we want to continue, we have to continue learning every day. So, continue to do your best every day. If anyone of you has the opportunity to teach someone anything, please do so. When you teach, you really discover your knowledge. We thank the Erasmus Mundus ERACOL programme for supporting us."



The Fellowship Programme of the Erasmus Summer Programme 2011 was attended by 34 students and faculty members, 24 of whom came from Brazil. Under the Science without Borders programme launched recently by the Brazilian government, many of these students will be able to continue their studies in Rotterdam.



Anton van Schijndel, NIHES representative in Brazil:
“The NIHES-Brazil Knowledge Platform is a recognition of Brazil’s vast potential for academic cooperation in the health sciences. We believe that the initiative will greatly accelerate academic cooperation in the framework of the Brazilian government’s Science without Borders programme.”



Elizabeth-Sophie Mazzella di Bosco Balsa, Minister-Counsellor, Embassy of Brazil to the Netherlands:

“I wish to stress that the President of Brazil, Dilma Rouseff, is personally engaged in promoting higher education, specially in the medical field, through programmes like Science without Borders. I wish to confirm that the Brazilian Embassy, and therefore the Brazilian Government, fully supports all cooperation and is fully committed to strengthening all ties between Erasmus University Rotterdam and Brazilian institutions. I wish all the students who are here today a rewarding continuation of their education and a very successful and fulfilling career.”





Sheilla De Oliveira Faria, Master of Public Health student, Sao Paulo Cancer Institute:

"Participation in the Erasmus Summer Programme Fellowships was a great opportunity for us to improve our knowledge of public health and epidemiology, and to exchange experience with fellow students from all over the world. We are pleased to have learned more about the Dutch culture and look forward to returning."

The NIHES awards for outstanding research papers were awarded to three graduates by Prof. Johan Mackenbach, Professor of Public Health and Chair of the NIHES Board.



Maria Carolina Medina Gomez, Master of Science in the Health Sciences (specialization in Genetic Epidemiology); ERACOL student from Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia.

Maria was tutored by Dr. Fernando Rivadeneira Ramirez of Erasmus MC Rotterdam, and received the award for her research paper "Variants in the 7q31 locus are strongly associated with total body mineralization in children of different ethnic background and with total body BMD of elderly adults."



Bob Johannes Hendrikus van Kempen, Master of Science in the Health Sciences (specialization in Clinical Epidemiology); student at Erasmus MC Rotterdam.

Bob was tutored by Prof. Myriam Hunink of Erasmus MC Rotterdam, and received the award for his research paper "Comparative effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of CT-screening for coronary artery calcium in asymptomatic individuals."



Sjoerd Toussaint Nauta, Master of Science in Clinical Research; student at Erasmus MC Rotterdam.

Sjoerd was tutored by Dr. Jaap Deckers of Erasmus MC Rotterdam, and received the award for his research paper "Changes in clinical profile, treatment, and mortality in patients hospitalized for acute myocardial infarction between 1985 and 2008."

[WATCH THE NIHES GRADUATION CEREMONY 2011 WEBCASTS](#)



About Netherlands Institute for Health Sciences – NIHES

The Netherlands Institute for Health Sciences (NIHES) is an alliance of leading Dutch universities and research institutes that collaborate on quantitative medical and health research. In our Master of Science programmes and short courses, we provide graduate and postgraduate research training in quantitative medicine and the health sciences. We have five core disciplines – Epidemiology, Clinical Epidemiology, Genetic Epidemiology, Public Health, and Medical Informatics – and four key partners: Erasmus University Rotterdam, University of Amsterdam, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, and the Netherlands Cancer Institute.

About NIHES-Brazil Knowledge Platform

The NIHES-Brazil Knowledge Platform is a response to Brazil's growing study-abroad market, and to employers' awareness that international training creates competitive advantage. The immediate aim of this initiative is to identify synergies for research-training in medicine and the health sciences. Such synergies should produce integrated research-training initiatives that support highly qualified students and health professionals. With financial support from public and private organizations, partner universities will next promote international exchanges of students and faculty.

About Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window

The Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window (EM ECW) is a cooperation and mobility scheme in the area of higher education cooperation launched by Europe Aid Cooperation Office and implemented by the Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual and Culture. The EM ECW objective is to achieve better understanding and mutual enrichment between the European Union and third countries co-operation in the field of higher education through promoting the exchange of persons, knowledge and skills at higher education level. This will be achieved through the promotion of partnerships and institutional cooperation exchanges between European Higher Education Institutions and Third Country institutions and a mobility scheme addressing student and academic exchanges.

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