While dental implantology has seen tremendous growth in the last 20 years, education standards for the field, particularly at university level, are still lacking. A recent European consensus workshop on implantology education in Budapest in Hungary sought to discuss ways to assure quality and effective education in implant dentistry. At this year’s EAO congress in Dublin, Dental Tribune International spoke with Dr Nikos Mattheos, one of the organisers of the latest consensus workshop in Budapest. Indeed, the Irish dental council is not alone in this. As the vast majority of dental boards have not recognised implantology as an independent dental specialty. The American Dental Association, for example, has repeatedly rejected applications by various bodies to recognise implantology as a new specialty.

The consensus workshop has also highlighted this position and does not see any need for implantology as a new specialty. I cannot reveal any details, as the detailed position paper will be published in early 2014, but the consensus is that implant dentistry is a multidisciplinary treatment modality that at present does not fulfil many critical requirements for recognition as an independent specialty.

Unfortunately, the truth is that many clinicians and societies are self-proclaimed implantologists or implant specialists, thus implying a specialist status. An established specialist, for example a perinodontist, is someone who has completed an accredited three-year full-time programme, has achieved specific knowledge and competencies as defined by the respective scientific and governmental bodies, and can perform an array of treatments, for which he or she has undergone adequate training.

However, the term “implantologist” is ill-defined and often misleading, as there is no widely accepted description as to what an implantologist is (competencies, scope of practice, etc.), nor any structured educational pathways defined for someone to reach such a status. So think the consensus is that among university lecturers in implant dentistry will agree with the Irish dental council and will discourage the use of the terms “implant specialist” and “implantologist” in any context.

Thank you very much for the interview.