Dental School of Aristotle University enters laser family

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[PICTURE: © VALERY ROKHIN]

_The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki is a historical university of Greece, located in Thessaloniki. It was founded back in 1925. Today, the university hosts 12 faculties, 41 schools, and numerous other units, such as laboratories, study rooms, libraries, clinics, research centres etc., covering a vast spectrum of scientific fields.

More than 95,000 students, of which 86,000 are in undergraduate programmes and 9,000 in postgraduate programmes, study at the Aristotle University. The teaching and research staff consists of 2,248 people with 716 professors, 506 associate professors, 576 assistant professors and 450 lecturers. The scientific teaching staff has 84 and the special laboratory teaching staff 275 employees.

This staff is supported by 309 members of the special technical laboratory for teaching services and administrative personnel with 1,028 people. In terms of number of staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students and the facilities offered, the University is the largest university in Greece and South East Europe. According to the Academic Ranking of World Universities, the University is ranked in places 301 to 400 amongst the 500 best universities worldwide in 2010. In 2012, it was ranked as the best University in Greece and in 2013 on the 194th place in the world which is 62nd in Europe. The School of Dentistry, belonging to the Faculty of Health Sciences, is located in the northwestern part of the University Campus.



It occupies two buildings, whereby the main building hosts the clinics, the laboratories and the administrative offices of the school and the second building, called Mandalidis Centre of Dental Research hosts the newer clinics of the postgraduate students and research facilities.

_School of Dentistry

6,992 dentists have graduated from the school of dentistry already, while today the number of students keeps on growing. The graduates graduates have been working not only in Greece but worldwide, being sought after as highly educated professionals. With such history and reputation, the school of Dentistry at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki is always trying to offer the highest education and research standards possible for their students. With this in mind, Prof. Kosmas Tolidis started the modern and innovative technology clinic with a laser and a CAD/CAM division in 2012. It was a breakthrough for laser dentistry in Greece. The vision of bringing future dentists closer to the latest developments and becoming the first school in Greece to treat patients and producing fundamental and clinical research in laser dentistry had finally become real.

As Prof. Tolidis explains: "It is my strong belief that it is of paramount importance that education and research foundations, such as our school, incorporate latest dental technology into every day usage. I consider that the best way for a student or even a dentist to familiarise with such procedures is a well-organised curriculum in such institutions. This is why I tried to get the

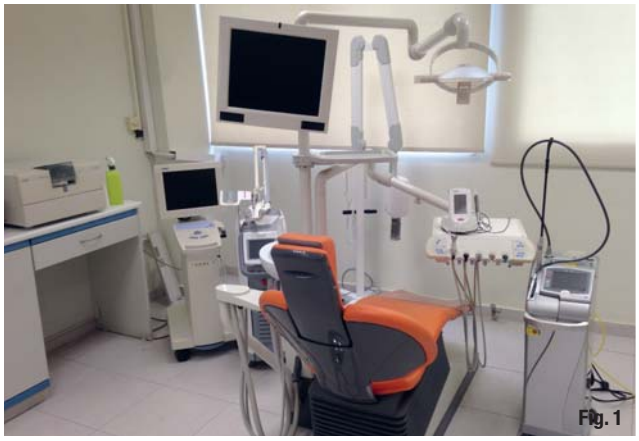

Fig. 1


Fig. 2

infrastructure as well as the appropriate manpower to perform such a demanding task. Laser procedures are already part of our postgraduate programme in Operative Dentistry and very soon an elective programme will start for our senior undergraduate students. Concurrently, in close cooperation with RWTH Aachen University in Germany, the world leading University in the field of Laser in Dentistry, and personally Prof. Norbert Gutknecht, the world opinion leader in this field, we are working on laser's research within the context of two PhD theses as well as on a number of research papers. I am pretty certain that despite difficulties (especially financial) the dental school of Aristotle University will very soon be considered as part of the group of dental schools leading the way in dental technology for the benefit of both our students as well as our patients."

Inevitably, a co-operation with the highest quality education institute of AALZ and RWTH Aachen University has started. Prof. Norbert Gutknecht, director of AALZ–Aachen Dental Laser Centre, has fully supported Prof. Tolidis' vision from the very beginning.

Prof. Gutknecht states: "Since Greek students have been the first students in our MSc programme which started at RWTH Aachen University in 2004, I am very proud and happy that out of these first Greek students Dr Dimitris Strakas became a faculty member of Aristotle University. With his capacity, being a Master of Science in Lasers in Dentistry achieved at RWTH Aachen University, he was appointed as the head of the high-tech department, giving first introduction lectures on lasers in dentistry to undergraduate students, as well as cooperating with AALZ and RWTH Aachen University in the master degree programme Laser Therapy in Dentistry in Greece.

Furthermore, I am happy that out of this collaboration we will have our first common PhD candidate working on the aspect of aesthetic dentistry with the use of different laser devices. It is of great importance that Prof. Tolidis is leading his department into the modern world of laser dentistry with us."

The general manager of AALZ, Mr Leon Vanweersch, comments on this collaboration: "I am very happy and excited that my very good friend Dr Dimitris Strakas became this very prestigious position as the first head of the new established high tech centre at the dental faculty of Aristoteles University in Thessaloniki. In my opinion, this is an important milestone to impart knowledge about the therapeutic use of lasers in dentistry to all existing and future dentists in Greece. With Dr Strakas, being also the president of the Greek Society of Laser Dentistry and president elect of the European Division of WFLD, Aristotle University and AALZ are having the right person to push forward the scientifically approved use of lasers in dentistry! Having met in person both Prof. Tolidis and Prof. Gerasimou, I strongly believe that the cooperation with us will be more than fruitful, also providing us the means to organise and complete more multicentre studies on laser therapy."

This initiation has been supported by many laser companies as Biolase, Fotona, Sirona, Lambda, A.R.C. and Lasotronic that has provided us with a number of laser devices of various wavelengths already. With their help and support many future dentists will be introduced to the world of laser dentistry and many more publications on both high-power and LLLT laser systems will be published. The dental school of Aristotle University is leading the way in Greece towards the future in modern dentistry and is empowering its reputation amongst European faculties._

Fig. 1_The new ambulance of the department with some of the laser and CAD/CAM devices.
Fig. 2_AALZ manager Mr Leon Vanweersch with the pioneers of the laser department Prof. Kosmas Tolidis, Prof. Paris Gerasimou and PhD candidate Dimitris Strakas.

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