

SEPTINTOJI TARPTAUTINĖ KONFERENCIJA

THE 7th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

2026 m. liepos mėn. 7-10 d., Vilniaus universitetas, LIETUVA

7th-10th of July, 2026, Vilnius University, LITHUANIA

**EVOLIUCINĖ MEDICINA:
ŽMOGAUS RAIDOS PERSPEKTYVOS IR SVEIKATA
BESIKEIČIANČIOJE APLINKOJE**

**EVOLUTIONARY MEDICINE:
PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH
CONSEQUENCES IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT**

Rengėjas:

Vilniaus universiteto Medicinos ir sveikatos mokslų
Doktorantūros mokykla, VU Medicinos fakultetas

Organized by

the Doctoral School of Medicine and Health sciences
at Vilnius University, VU Faculty of Medicine

CELEBRATING THE 245TH ANNIVERSARY OF VILNIUS UNIVERSITY'S FACULTY OF MEDICINE: A LOOK AT THE ORIGINS OF SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT

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The Faculty of Medicine of Vilnius University celebrates its 245th anniversary in 2026, marking a long tradition of medical education and scientific advancement. Founded on 24 November 1781 as the Collegium Medicum within the Main School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, it emerged during the Enlightenment following the dissolution of the Jesuit Order and the transfer of the University to the Education Commission, often regarded as the world's first ministry of public education. Its establishment marked a decisive shift towards secular, scientifically grounded medicine in the region.

The foundations of the Faculty had been laid earlier. In 1775, Nicolas Régnier established the first Department of Anatomy and Surgery, while students from the Royal Medical School of Grodno were transferred to Vilnius. The first dean, Steponas Laurynas Bizis, together with Jean-Emmanuel Gilibert and Johann Lobenwein, developed a curriculum integrating anatomy, physiology, surgery, and obstetrics with practical clinical training.

The Faculty reached its peak during the "Golden Age" of 1803–1832, following the University's reorganisation as Imperial Vilnius University by Tsar Alexander I. This period was shaped by Johann Peter Frank, a pioneer of public health and social medicine, and his son Joseph Frank, who established the first clinical wards for therapeutics, surgery, and obstetrics. Their work helped transform the Faculty into one of the leading centres of medical education in Central and Eastern Europe.

The November Uprising of 1831 brought this flourishing era to an end. In 1832, Tsar Nicholas I closed the University, although medical education continued through the Imperial Medical-Surgical Academy of Vilnius until 1842. After the Faculty was closed, some of its library collections and scientific specimens were moved, mainly to Kyiv.

This lecture examines the Faculty's first six decades, highlighting how scientific progress and medical education were shaped by broader political, social, and cultural transformations.

Keywords: Central and Eastern Europe, enlightenment, Faculty of Medicine, history of medicine, medical education, Vilnius University