

## Abstract

Medical sciences have evolved from fairly generic to highly specialized fields over the 20th century.

Increased specialization has not only brought about the benefits associated with division of labour but also negative side-effects including divergent and separatist approaches, little or no horizontal integration of strategies and weak collaboration between disciplines and sectors in what is popularly referred to as the 'silo culture'. The need for collaboration between the animal and human medical fields was pointed to by Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902) who, over a century ago, stated that "Between animal and human medicine there is no dividing line-nor should there be". Other luminaries like William Osler (1849-1919) and Calvin Schwabe (1927-2006) developed the concept of One Medicine that clearly articulated the necessity for integrated approaches within the life sciences.

With the emergence, over the last few decades, of serious global threats including those of pandemic diseases, the global community has been re-awakened to the absolute need for integrative, transdisciplinary and collaborative approaches in solving the problems that face humanity. Conservation medicine emerged in the mid 1990s as an interdisciplinary field that addresses the broad scope of ecological health taking into consideration the interrelationships between animal and human health and environmental health. More recently, there is a strong global drive towards what is known as the One Health paradigm that can be traced to an international meeting convened in New York in 2004 by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) during which scientists drawn from the global community made a resolution that would be known as the Manhattan Principles of One World, One Health (WCS Registered Trade Mark). Ministers from African countries representing relevant sectors have discussed and adapted the One Health principles during international ministerial meetings held at Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt in 2008. This presentation looks at the relevance of the Conservation Medicine in Africa and how the African continent has responded to the One Health drive.