

Europa Medicophysica is Indexed by Medline: opening new perspectives for European, Mediterranean and Italian physical and rehabilitation medicine

S. NEGRINI ¹, N. CHRISTODOULOU ², A. GIUSTINI ³, H. RING ⁴, H. STAM ⁵

Europa Medicophysica is a historical, forty one-years-old, glorious scientific journal, that followed almost the entire history of European and Italian physical and rehabilitation medicine (PRM), and that in the last years overcame the boundaries of Europe to include in its interest all the Mediterranean area.

PRM for years has been considered the cinderella of clinical sciences, because its attention focused historically more on persons than on illnesses, while its methods of treatment are centered more on relationships than on biological or chemical patterns: now this is considered a requirement for all medical activities. The long standing absence of measurement instruments in PRM, even with some resistance in the physicians devoted to this human science to consider it also a science *per se*, is almost cancelled today by a strong evolution of both classification and evaluation tools ranging from outcomes to quality of life and satisfaction of treatments: today this is not only research, it is everyday clinical practice. The PRM doctor, that used to be the unimportant end of a chain driven by other specialists, is now the centre of a strong and large team, an interdisciplinary network devoted to the care of single persons: in intensive care, hospitals, research centres, universities, and community. All this was particularly true in Europe and even more in the Latin world, where humanistic approaches to medicine are more traditional than scientific ones, not only in PRM. Europa Medicophysica followed this pathway, but everything changed in the last years.

Address reprint requests to: S. Negrini, ISICO, Via Carlo Crivelli 20, 20122 Milano. E-mail: stefano.negrini@isico.it

- ¹Chief-Editor of Europa Medicophysica - Scientific and Medical Director of ISICO (Italian Scientific Spine Institute), Milan, Italy
²President of Mediterranean Forum of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (MFRM), Medical Director Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Institute Limassol, Cyprus
³President of Italian Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (SIMFER), Scientific Director of Maugeri Foundation Montescano (PV), Italy
⁴Past President of International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM), Founder and President of the First Mediterranean PM&R Congress Professor and Chairman, Loewenstein Hospital Rehabilitation Center Neurological Rehabilitation Department, Raanana, Israel
⁵President of European Federation of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (EFPMR), Professor and Head of the Department of PM&R University Hospital of Rotterdam, Holland

The World Health Organization (WHO) clearly defined through ICIDH before, and now ICF, the boundaries of the discipline as well as its specificity and characteristics, being inside and on the side of clinical medicine, where ICD is the classification of reference. These new developments, together with the growing of new generations of physicians that were from the beginning physiatrists (and not neurologists, or orthopaedic surgeons, or other specialists, "and" finally also physiatrists) drove to fast changes in the world of PRM. This revolution, typical of our field,

came together with a more general interest in southern Europe and the Mediterranean area to a true, complete scientific approach. Again, *Europa Medicophysica* followed, and sometimes contributed to drive, these changes.

In the field of PRM, it is well known that the Italian experience is one of the most important in Europe, for tradition, number of physicians involved, number of patients treated, legislative approaches and, last but not least, scientific contribution. So, it is not by chance that *Europa Medicophysica* reaches today for Italy, the Mediterranean area and Europe a new, prestigious goal.

Europa Medicophysica is in Medline/Index Medicus

This result has been achieved in June 2005, thanks to an effort that started many years ago and that focused in an outstanding volume of our journal in 2004 (but in the future this will remain our minimum standard), with 14 original research papers (5 were randomized controlled trials), 15 reviews by recognized international scientists with high personal impact factor (1 was a Cochrane and another a systematic review), 5 editorials, 3 case reports and 3 commentaries. This is the result of the work of a new generation of clinical scientists that is growing in Italy, in the Mediterranean area and in Europe under the patronage of a few masters.

The new organization of the journal, wanted by Alessandro Giustini, the SIMFER Board of Directors, with the Mediterranean Forum of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (MFPRM and Nicolas Christodoulou), and the European Federation of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (EFPMR and Henk Stam) simply focused on something that was already going on, and finalized the general efforts of an entire geographical area. Moreover, we are greatly indebted to Haim Ring (Past President of the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine - ISPRM, and Founder and President of the First Mediterranean PM&R Congress) and Franco Franchignoni (Senior Editor) for their incessant and authoritative advice and support. Nevertheless, we cannot neglect mentioning the other Senior and Associate Editors, the Assistant Editors Donatella Bonaiuti, Gabriella Ceravolo, and Nicola Smania, with their important contribution to drive the peer review

process; the Editorial Board and the Board of Directors, that now need to work even more to sustain the new efforts that we will face in the nearby future; the Scientific Secretary, Marco Monticone; and the Managing Editor Alberto Oliaro, with Elena, Marcella, Eugenia, Rosanna and the entire staff of *Minerva Medica*.

But, what does it mean for the clinical physiatrist that *Europa Medicophysica* is in *Index Medicus*? Nothing else than reading high quality papers produced by well prepared clinical scientists after a careful peer review process, that is the only guarantee of quality, and improvement of the contents of each single paper published.

And, what does it mean for the researcher physiatrist that *Europa Medicophysica* is in *Index Medicus*? First, there is now an extra journal available to publish excellent papers: in PRM in general, and mainly in Europe, there is a lack of space available for research papers. The time between acceptance and publication is in most cases more than one year, and many good studies have to be rejected. Papers will be judged with equity, according to the international rules, receiving sometimes rejections as well as corrections, and the reward will be publishing and receiving the attention of the entire world through *Medline* and its electronic version *PubMed*.

Finally, what does it mean for our country, region, continent that *Europa Medicophysica* is in *Index Medicus*? Nothing else than having more visibility and space for our typical topics and contents, that in any case must be developed and presented according to the world rules that guarantee everybody: the reader, the journal, and science. But having this possibility is an occasion to be used.

A new start

Forty-one years after Fiandesio (the first Chief Editor and founder of our journal), *Europa Medicophysica* today begins a new sailing towards ever-growing results. Increasing the quality of papers, increasing the visibility of the journal and of the world that it represents, is only a part of this new travel. Together with the usual publication of original researches (we are changing the rules for authors, to increase paper readability and quality), we will continue hosting the invited mini-review on selected PRM topics from well-known, highly impacted protagonists of the scientific

ic world, from now on joined to selected Mediterranean researchers; we will invite editorials as well as selected high quality research papers from national and international meetings of our region; we will stimulate discussion through commentaries and we will continue publishing the series Guidelines in PRM. Remaining in Index Medicus is not even a question, while reaching the impact factor is only the next

step we want to achieve. Now what we want and what we need is to establish our journal in the scientific world and context, to reach as soon as possible a good (the best possible) rank among scientific PRM journals. Let's look at the future with the certainty of our past and the confidence of our present, to build up something more than a simple hope: a reasonable step forward.