

Short history of Europa Medicophysica: 41 years of contributions to the scientific roots of the Specialty of physical and rehabilitation medicine

S. NEGRINI¹, S. BOCCARDI², F. FRANCHIGNONI³, P. DI BENEDETTO⁴, A. OLLARO⁵

Europa Medicophysica is born in 1964, and his history follows, and sometimes contributes to drive that of the Specialty of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM) in Europe and Italy. The second name was "The European Journal of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation" (Figure 1), being since the beginning the Official Journal of the European Federation of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, as well as that of the Società Italiana di Medicina Fisica e Riabilitativa (Italian Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine, SIMFER) (Figure 2). In the European Editorial Board there were 28 members from 17 countries, while in the Italian one there were 13 members; the journal was organised in 2 parts: first, the international one, with papers in English or French, then the Italian one (Figure 3). In the first Editorial, published in our 3 official languages, the 3 founders Dario Fiandesio (that also served as the first Chief-Editor), Giorgio Nino Valobra and Rene Waghemacker stated: "For many years the need has been felt among exponents of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation for a European journal in which to express their views and discuss common problems".¹ In fact, looking at Index Medicus/Medline and at the general rehabilitation journal, in those years in Europe existed only "Rehabilitation" (England: 1948-1977) and "Die Rehabilitation" (Germany: 1962), while of those still publishing worldwide only "Archives of physical medicine and rehabilitation" (USA: 1953), and the "Journal of rehabilitation" (USA: 1945) were already founded. The mission of our journal was: "For those already spe-

¹Chief-Editor of Europa Medicophysica
Scientific and Medical Director of ISICO
(Italian Scientific Spine Institute), Milan, Italy
²Senior-Editor of Europa Medicophysica
(Chief-Editor from 1986 to 1991)
Consulting, IRCCS Don Gnocchi Foundation, Milan, Italy
³Senior-Editor of Europa Medicophysica
(Chief-Editor from 1992 to 1996)
Salvatore Maugeri Foundation, Veruno (NO), Italy
⁴Senior-Editor of Europa Medicophysica
(Chief-Editor from 1996 to 2004)
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Institute, Udine, Italy
⁵Managing Editor of Europa Medicophysica
Minerva Medica, Turin, Italy

cialized in this field, Europa Medicophysica will provide forum for scientific discussion; for those whose attitude to the subject is one of scientific interest, it will provide a guide and up-to-date source of information".¹ The name of the journal was chosen to outline the geographical area and the discipline of reference, the title was in Latin to stress one of the common European roots, and a main aim was to play a central role in the development of our discipline across Europe. This message continues to be valid, even if today Latin seems somehow "antique" and creates difficulties with the modern language of science: English (e.g. the abbreviation of our journal becomes a strange "Eura Medicophys" in Medline). The first issue of the journal was published in 1965, the year in which for the first time all Italian physiatrists joined in one single Scientific Society, the SIMFER, that had been founded in Turin in 1958.

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

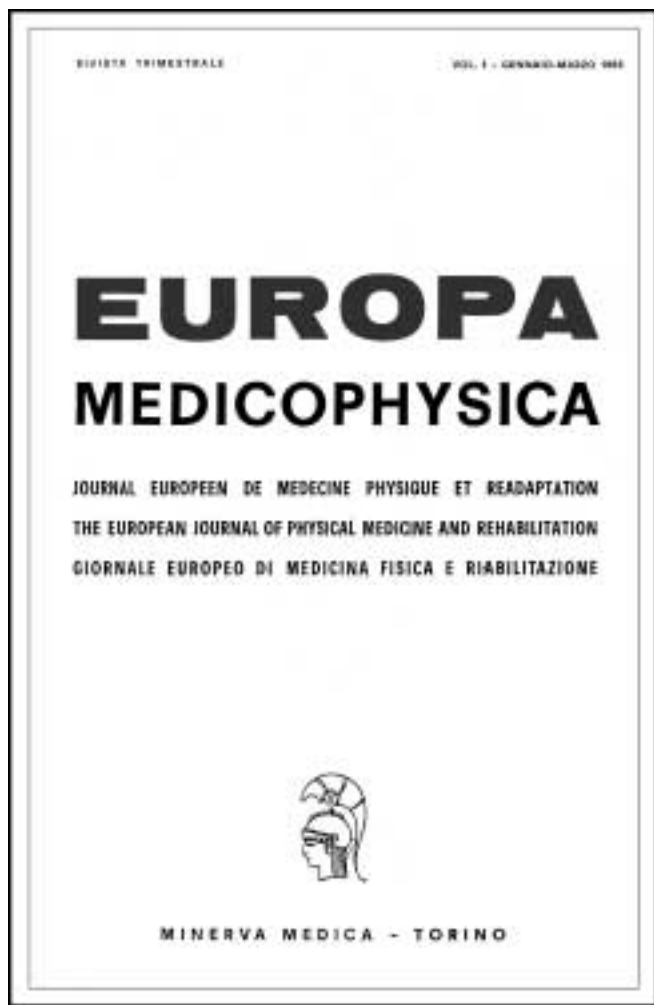


Figure 1.—Cover of the first issue of the Journal.



Figure 2.—Editorial board published in the first issue of the Journal.

Dario Fiandesio was Chief-Editor for as far as 21 years, from 1964 to 1986. He faced the burden to follow with a scientific journal the rapid evolution of what was at that time a new discipline: *e.g.* in 1953 there was only one out-patient PRM service inside hospitals, with only one school for physical therapists (PTs) in Italy. In those years, a very interesting study by Amedeo Tonazzi² presented the state of the art of our Specialty in Europe: only 9 countries had officially the Specialty of PRM (with different names), one had a University chair (Czechoslovakia), and 4 countries (Czechoslovakia, France, Holland, and Italy) had PRM in-hospital wards. In last 30 years, there was a enormous/dramatic increase all over the continent

in postgraduate schools of PRM (as well of the schools for PTs), PRM in-patient wards and out-patient services, and other rehabilitation resources. And more importantly, the need of these resources was widely recognised politically and by laws as well as at scientific and social level.^{3, 4} At those times, our journal contained mainly review papers on different and new/updated topics, following the new developments of our science, together with careful looks at the allied specialties. In this way, the expertise, wisdom, knowledge and style of Dario Fiandesio, together with his wife Beatrice, and Valobra and Tonazzi (his close friends, and members and Italian delegates—as Fiandesio was—of important European PRM organi-

EUROPA MEDICOPHYSICA	
REVUE OFFICIELLE DE LA FEDERATION EUROPEENNE DE MEDECINE PHYSIQUE ET READAPTATION	
EDIZIONI MINERVA MEDICA - Corso Bramante 83-85 - TORINO (Italy)	
Volume 1 - N. 1 Giugno/Marzo 1985	
SOMMARIO	
Europa Medicophysica (D. Flammia, G. N. Valera, R. Wasthacker)	Nota
J. Durand - G. De Bisschop: Intérêt de la stimulo-dilatation en traumatologie	Fédération Européenne de Médecine Physique et réadaptation 56
K. Bernat - L. Hryniwiczki - G. Struzynski: Influence des ultrasons sur les comportements des protéines et des composés azotés simples dans le sang et dans quelques organes ainsi que sur l'occlusivité du sang	Terzo Congresso Nazionale della Società Italiana di Medicina Fisica e Riabilitazione 59
E. Sjöberg: Progress in short wave therapy with special reference to the endocrine system	1 ^{er} Colloque Européen de Réadaptation organisé par les Services Belges de Réadaptation, sous les auspices de la Fédération Européenne de Médecine Physique et de Réadaptation (17-18-19 juin 1985) 59
F. Bach: Arthritis, ability and disability from disability to work	Primo Simposio Mediterraneo sulla paralisi cerebrale 60
Europa Medicophysica (R. Zonta)	First Congress of the International Federation of Manual Medicine (London, 25-28 September 1981) 61
A. Magli: Prekursori e tecniche di nuovo nei paralizzati	Société Luxembourgeoise de Médecine Physique et Réadaptation 62
A. Tosano: Possibilità e limiti della medicina fisica di fronte alle scissure da poliartrite	Svenska Rehabiliteringssektionen för fysisk terapi, rehabilitering och social medicin 62
	Comitato direttivo italiano 63

Figure 3.—Contents of the first issue of the Journal.

zations), made Europa Medicophysica as a pivotal responsible instrument of the increasing success of PRM, in Italy and Europe.

Silvano Boccardi became the second Chief-Editor of the journal in 1987 with this mission: “more ideas, more science, more news”.⁵ According to the International Guidelines for Medical Journals, the peer-review process started, and many editorial changes were made, including the adoption of the “Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals” published by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors,⁶ and the translation of abstracts in English and French. The contents included both Physical Medicine and

Rehabilitation Medicine issues, looking at new trends in our Specialty. Original and invited papers focused on basic science, evaluation and treatment techniques, as well as rehabilitation management problems. More papers were submitted and many were accepted only after major editorial revision (or rejected): authors accustomed themselves day after day to this “hurting” process, and the quality of the research reported in the journal and of our reviewers progressively increased.

When Franco Franchignoni became the new Chief-Editor of the journal in 1992 the wish of many clinicians of our Specialty for increasing their quality in writing scientific papers was recognised, and this was one of the main mission of the journal.⁷ The blind peer review process was strengthened (in 1992: rejection rate was 50%, and a major revision was required in 25% of papers), and a real internal audit was started.⁸ The contents of the journal included didactic tools, such as papers on research methodology in PMR, support in planning research protocols and statistical analysis, as well as trends in new rehabilitation topics (such as quality assurance and improvement in PRM, perineal rehabilitation, neuropsychology etc.), but also reviews on selected areas crucial for PMR (elderly rehabilitation, occupational therapy, immobility and related issues, the role of physical agents etc.).

Paolo Di Benedetto served as Chief-Editor from 1995 to 2004.⁹ The main achievements in that period included the decision of publishing Europa Medicophysica exclusively in English (since 1997)¹⁰ and the further increase of submissions of original papers, of contributions coming from abroad, and of international participation to the Editorial Board offices. Moreover, Europa Medicophysica progressively increased its links with the Mediterranean Area and become the official journal of the Mediterranean Forum of PRM:¹¹ this development meant fostering the cooperation with those nearby countries (in Europe, Africa and Asia) where the specialty is still developing, without forgetting our European original connections. The journal was acquiring almost completely its actual shape, and all premises to become a leading journal in PRM were ready to be submitted to the international/worldwide attention.

In 2004 Stefano Negrini began to serve as Chief-Editor,¹² and renewed scientific and organizational efforts were made to face the changing world of science and achieve the recognition by PubMed/Medline,

that has been finally reached in these days. This result acknowledges the value of our history, of our scientific and editorial path related to the development of PRM in our region, and our continuous quality improvement, started by some pioneers many years ago and carried till today thanks to many international PRM experts who are sharing our scientific and educational project. This outcome is a strong encouragement for our journal in doing better and better in the future.

References

1. Fiandesio D, Valobra GN, Waghmacker R. *Europa Medicophysica*. *Eura Medicophys* 1965;1:3-4.
2. Tonazzi A. Commission des Intérêts Généraux de la Profession. *Eura Medicophys* 1969;5:1-8.
3. European Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine, European Federation of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, UEMS Section of PRM. White book on Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.
4. Gutenbrunner C, Ward AB. White Book on Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine in Europe. (advanced draft - August 2005).
5. Boccardi S. Editoriale. *Eura Medicophys* 1987;23.
6. Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing for Biomedical Publication. www.icm-je.org
7. Franchignoni F. Editoriale. *Eura Medicophys* 1992;28:1-2.
8. Franchignoni F. The passage to publication. The peer review process. *Eura Medicophys* 1994;30:105-7. [Italian]
9. Di Benedetto P. Editoriale. *Eura Medicophys* 1996;32.
10. Di Benedetto P. A "new" journal for a "new" physiatrist. *Eura Medicophys* 1997;33:1.
11. Di Benedetto P. Preface. *Eura Medicophys* 2003;39:1.
12. Negrini S. Looking at the future, with the power of the present: our targets, our tools, our needs *Eura Medicophys* 2004;40:161-3.

Letter to Dario Fiandesio, founder of Europa Medicophysica, by Amedeo Tonazzi

Per Dario FIANDESIO

dalla Terra il 7 luglio 2005

Caro Dario che sei nei Cieli,

oggi ricorreva l'anniversario della tua nascita, come da antica consuetudine, come quando c'eri, per ricordarti ho contattato la tua Beatrice che non è scindibile dal ricordo di quanto tu hai fatto e ci hai dato.

Oggi, nello stesso giorno, da un comunicato di Stefano Negrini, passatomi da Carlo Bertolini, apprendo che "Europa Medicophysica" è stata ammessa all'Index Medicus.

Quando tu, insieme al tuo amico fraterno Giorgio Valobra e a René Waghmacker, la fondasti, fu fornita alla SIMFER una palestra culturale che fu il legante fondamentale della nostra Società Scientifica. Ne fosti Editore Capo dal 1964 al 1986. Riuscisti anche a fare di essa l'organo ufficiale della Fédération Européenne de Médecine Physique et de Réadaptation, conquista prestigiosa, ma anche foriera di tanti affanni. Nessuno meglio di me, che accanto a te ho rappresentato la SIMFER in seno alla Federazione per un ventennio, sa quanto abbiamo dovuto poi difendere la rivista da invidie o disconoscimenti altrui. Ma, come tanti altri, ricordo gli infiniti altri problemi che tu sapesti affrontare per farla sopravvivere alle infinite difficoltà editoriali ed economiche, quando la nostra SIMFER era una bella ma ancora giovane adolescente.

Ma non facciamo i nostalgici del passato: ti ricordi, amavamo la concretezza.

Ed allora grazie a tutti coloro che con i loro contributi organizzativi, culturali, scientifici e di qualsiasi altra natura hanno portato oggi Europa Medico Physica a questo prestigioso riconoscimento che è la più bella ricompensa che poteva essere data a chi in passato aveva gettato un seme che oggi è rigogliosamente cresciuto.

Caro Dario, tante infinite volte fummo d'accordo, sono sicuro che anche ora saresti d'accordo con me a dire ai giovani ed ex giovani che ci seguirono che siamo noi a essere loro riconoscenti. È passato tanto tempo, sono trascorsi rapidamente così tanti anni, stiamo diventando degli sconosciuti, ma siano certi che coloro che ci hanno seguiti hanno la consapevolezza che le cellule staminali sono importanti. E penseranno a Te.

Ti abbraccio.

Amedeo Tonazzi

For Dario FIANDESIO

the Earth, July 7, 2005

Dear Dario, who are in haven,

today would have been your birthday. And as I would always do while you were still with us, I called Beatrice to send my greetings, something that cannot be separated from the memory of what you mean for us.

Just today I received from Stefano Negrini through Carlo Bertolini that the journal *Europa Medicophysica* has been accepted to Index Medicus.

When you, together with your fraternal friend Giorgio Valobra and René Waghmacker, founded the journal, SIMFER received a cultural forum that was to become a key center for our scientific society. From 1964 to 1986 you were the journal's Chief-Editor. You succeeded in making it the official organ of the Fédération Européenne de Médecine Physique et de Réadaptation, a conquest that was as bold as it was arduous. No one better than I, who together with you represented SIMFER in the Federation for 20 years, know how hard we had to work to defend the journal against the cries of envy and disavowal. But like many, I too remember the endless other problems you knew how to handle to keep the journal afloat in the midst of editorial and economic difficulties, when SIMFER was just gaining its legs.

But let us not dwell on the past; for you remember, we always counted on concreteness.

So a warm thanks to all those who contributed with their organizational, cultural, scientific and many other efforts to help the journal attain this prestigious recognition, which is the best award for anyone who sowed the seed of the plant that now yields fruit.

Dear Dario, thinking back to all the times we agreed, I'm sure you'd agree with me again in saying to our young and no longer readers that we are the ones who are grateful. So much time has passed, so many years have gone by so quickly; we are fading fast, but we feel certain that those who have followed us are aware that stem cells are important. And they will think of you.

A heartfelt embrace.

Amedeo Tonazzi