Thirty years of CLP in Italy

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It is not possible to talk about the last decades history of CLP in Italy without mentioning the landmark foundation of the SIMP (Società Italiana di Medicina Psicosomatica) in 1966, which had its first congress in Rome organized by F. Antonelli and L. Ancona, with C.L. Cazzullo as Honorary President, in 1967. This was, strictly speaking, the first world congress of psychosomatics, despite the fact that the ECPR (European Conference of Psychosomatic Research) was active since 1955, while the ICPM (International College of Psychosomatic Medicine) was founded in 1970. The second SIMP congress was held in Verona, with Gualtiero Untieri as President.

The following period was strongly marked by F. Antonelli’s vision and wisdom, until his death in 2000. In this period clinical and research groups thrived in Milan, Rome, Bologna, Pavia, Genoa, Bari, Ferrara and Modena. Important Psychosomatics and Psychiatry textbooks were published, and, in 2002, one specifically dedicated to CLP.

Meanwhile, important developments affected the subject area. From the organizational point of view, the law 180/1978, known as the law that closed asylums down in Italy, decreed that psychiatric wards had to be opened in General Hospitals, which facilitated the diffusion of CLP beyond University Hospitals, where it was mainly practiced until then.

The scientific and teaching activities have gradually expanded, also through the formation of the GRP working group (Gruppo di Ricerca Psicosomatica, 2004). In the same period also the activities of the SIPC (Società Italiana di Psichiatria di Consultazione, 1989) developed, with a special focus in connecting with European research groups (ECLW, European Consultation Liaison Workgroup, 1987) and, later, with EACLPP (European Association of Consultation Liaison Psychiatry and Psychosomatics), until the creation of the EAPM (European Association of Psychosomatic Medicine, 2013), which reunites psychosomatics and CLP interests.

This re-unification is also well portrayed in the current EAPM congress in Verona and in the future ICPM congress in Florence next year.

Maybe it is not by chance that this process has been heralded in the US by the official recognition of Psychosomatic Medicine as a psychiatry sub-specialty in 2003.