

Introduction

The 1st European Symposium on Psoriasis was organized by Professor Carmelo Scarpa in autumn 1978 in Trieste, Italy. This Symposium was the first dermatology meeting to be conducted in Italy in the English language, as Professor Scarpa believed that scientific meetings should not be limited to a national scientific community but should be expanded, at least at European level. To some delegates that first congress appeared to be "eccentric"; however, it did in fact anticipate future events and one only has to look at the present calendar of congresses to confirm this. Subsequently, numerous meetings and courses have been organized by the different Italian Schools of Dermatology. Professor Scarpa also wished the Symposium to be an opportunity for young researchers to present their recent studies, rather than being a stage purely for established researchers.

All the papers presented at the first congress were published in Supplement 87 of *Acta Dermato-Venereologica*. Subsequent Symposia have been organized every 5 years in Trieste, with a growing attendance and an increase in the number of papers submitted: 33 at the 1st Symposium in 1978, 49 at the 2nd (1983), 68 at the 3rd (1988) and 92 at the 4th (1993). All of the contributions presented at the Symposia have been published as supplements of *Acta Dermato-Venereologica*. In 1998 the Symposium was organized in Milan by Professor Aldo Finzi and was associated with the American Symposium, becoming the International Meeting on Psoriasis.

In the last 20 years many things have changed, not just in the scientific world but also especially in the sociopolitical setting. The ending of the division of Europe into two opposing blocks has facilitated cooperation with colleagues from Eastern European countries, who had been excluded for many years from collaboration with Western Europe. The rate of progress in these countries in recent years is impressive

in any field. To further catalyse this process of collaboration, the Institute of Dermatology at the University of Trieste, which 20 years ago was a pioneer in understanding the importance of international relationships, proposed this meeting with the Eastern European dermatology community. In particular, we invited dermatologists from the Alpe Adria region, where East–West dialogue has always been more frequent and advanced for geographical, historical and cultural reasons.

With these premises in mind we organized the 5th Tergestinum Symposium on Psoriasis in November 1998 in conjunction with the Alpe Adria Meeting, with the participation of Austrian, Croatian, German, Hungarian, Italian and Slovenian researchers. According to the tradition of our previous meetings on psoriasis, we wanted to prepare a supplement of *Acta Dermato-Venereologica*, in this case with a selection of six studies selected by the Scientific Board of the Symposium.

We hope that the 5th Tergestinum Symposium on Psoriasis, like the 1st European Symposium on Psoriasis 20 years ago, becomes the first of a series of increasingly successful meetings on psoriasis in the Alpe Adria region and beyond. We wish to thank once more all the participants at the meeting and in particular the dermatology schools of Bari, Bologna, Bolzano, Brunico, Budapest, Celje, Forlì, Graz, Kaposvar, Ljubljana, Maribor, Rijeka, Regensburg, Udine and Zagreb. A special thanks also to the Editor of *Acta Dermato-Venereologica*, who gave us, once more, the opportunity of presenting our Symposium as a supplement.

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