

Like last year, it is a renewed privilege for me to introduce the proceedings of our annual scientific and social forum, the National Congress of the Italian Society for the Study of Headaches, *Headaches: acquisitions and controversies*, this year in its XXth edition.

The chosen topics cover many fields, the developments of which need to be reviewed critically, confronted with original results from the numerous different interdisciplinary research groups of our large and scientifically very productive society.

The main issues, from the genetics of primary headaches to the socioeconomic aspects; from the considerations regarding the ICHD-II criteria to the problem of cortical excitability; from headache as an emergency condition in childhood and adolescence to psychopathological factors, will be dealt with. On the frontline of therapy, the intriguing problem/resource of the placebo will also be discussed, along with the strategies in using triptans and the new perspectives of preventative therapies. The difficulties of managing the chronic patient and the often related problem of drug misuse/abuse will also be specifically addressed.

Along with invited lectures and round tables, a workshop and pros and cons sessions have been organised to expand the modalities of congressional debate. Two scientific sessions have been planned in cooperation with the Italian Society of Internal Medicine and with the Italian Association of Ambulatorial and Territorial Neurologists, underlying the multidisciplinary nature of our society and our commitment with other societies in order to provide more integrated answers to patients' needs.

This year's contributions emphasise the continuous growth of our society. The great increase in the number of submissions from a significantly larger number of members prompted the Scientific Committee to organise a new session entitled *Oral communications with posters*. Its aim is to give evidence both to the oral presentation and to the wealth of data that only a poster can offer, so that results can, firstly, be pointed out orally, in front of the plenary audience, and secondly, discussed at length individually with those colleagues who are specifically interested in the topic.

As you will have noticed, the Congress Proceedings are now peer-reviewed abstracts, in keeping with the modalities adopted by other large, authoritative societies. Furthermore, the abstracts of the Congress are no longer printed in a supplement, but within *The Journal of Headache and Pain*, which since last January has become the official journal of the European Headache Federation (EHF) – a significant gesture of esteem towards our society by the EHF and a

recognition of the quality of *The Journal of Headache and Pain*. Being hosted in a regular issue of the journal gives the congresses of the European national societies – in this case ours – a vast international audience, fostering mutual knowledge and cooperation.

The location of the Congress in Rome, after the previous one in Padua/Venice, continues a choice that connects science and culture. Along with an excellent scientific programme, participants will be able to enjoy the artistic and historical atmosphere that only the “Città Eterna” can offer. On this occasion, I wish to thank, also on behalf of our society, all those who have helped to organise this XXth SISC Congress and contributed to the preparation of the proceedings: my Co-President of the Congress, Professor Girolamo Di Trapani; the Scientific Committee and Secretariat; the Local Organizing Committee; the entire Executive Committee of the Italian Society for the Study of Headaches; and our generous Sponsors. And last, but not least, all of you, who continuously work with your patients and in your labs to promote new developments to relieve the burden of headache.

A warm, friendly welcome to Rome, with wishes of a very fruitful, scientifically and socially rewarding congress.

Giorgio Zanchin
President
Italian Society for the Study of Headaches