



COMMENT

In memoriam Claudio F. Donner

E. Clini^{1,*}

University Hospital of Modena, Respiratory Diseases Unit, Department of Medical and Surgical Sciences SMECHIMAI, University of Modena Reggio Emilia, Italy

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Claudio F. Donner (1948-2021) unexpectedly passed away. The news reached most friends and colleagues while still on their annual leave but rapidly spread all around the community astonishing everyone. Too early he left in grief his wife Franca and the daughter Valentina, his family living in Borgomanero a city close to Novara placed in the western-north part of Italy.

Claudio Donner was an excellent medical doctor from the moment he graduated from the University of Pavia and subsequently got diplomas in medical specialties. Respiratory medicine was his primary interest in clinical practice and he dedicated himself in particular to the chronic respiratory patients with conditions leading to inability in the daily life. For this reason, he started his career in 1973 at the “Salvatore Maugeri Foundation Research Institute, Center of Veruno” where he served until 2006 as chief of the Division of Pulmonary Disease, and then as director of the Department of Pulmonary Rehabilitative Medicine of that institution. In recent years he worked as the medical director of “Mondo Medico Multidisciplinary and Rehabilitation Clinic” in Borgomanero.

Together with patient care Claudio Donner rapidly developed his stance as a clinical scientist and researcher on a wide range of topics including pathophysiological mechanisms of exercise, acute and chronic respiratory failure, pulmonary rehabilitation and COPD, sleep respiratory disorders and quality of life in patients with chronic and acute on

chronic respiratory failure. He contributed to the widening of the concept of rehabilitation as the fundamental care option in respiratory patients by co-authoring international statements^{1,2} fostered by prestigious scientific societies representing the Respiratory Medicine in the world. He was one of the first to understand the great value of intensive exercise training as a determinant part of the rehabilitation process for disabled and symptomatic patients, introducing scientific collaboration through his fellows together with the major world experts in the field.³ Finally, he is the author of several textbooks (the last one on Pulmonary Rehabilitation just released this year by Francis&Taylor editorial Group) and numerous original scientific papers: the PubMed online library reports 207 peer-reviewed articles published in international scientific journals worldwide.⁴ Not least, Claudio Donner was founder and past editor-in-chief of scientific journal *Monaldi Archives for Chest Disease* (1993-2002), as well as associate editor of *Respiratory Medicine* since 2005, past co-editor (1990-2004) of the *Italian Review of Respiratory Disease* (1990-2004) and of *Multidisciplinary Respiratory Medicine* (2006-2016). Moreover, he was very active in the field of respiratory medicine through teaching initiatives while he was also on the faculty of medical schools in Ferrara, Turin, and Novara. In 2001, was appointed as the contact person of the National Committee for Continuous Education by the Italian Ministry of Health.

“For these reasons, Claudio Donner made a substantial contribution to upgrade and modernize pulmonology – says Dr. Bruno Balbi present director of the Clinic in Veruno – thus making our clinic recognized all over the world”.

Claudio Donner served professional associations in a number of capacities including as president of the Italian

* Correspondence to. University of Modena and Reggio Emilia Chair of Respiratory Medicine, Director Post-doctoral School in Respiratory Medicine, Azienda Ospedaliera-Universitaria di Modena, Policlinico, Director, Pneumology Unit, Largo del Pozzo 71, 41125 Modena, Italy.

E-mail address: enrico.clini@unimore.it

¹ Skype: enrico.clini

Association of Hospital Pulmonologists (AIPO) (1995-1997) and of the Italian Interdisciplinary Association for Research in Lung Disease (AIMAR) (2003-2012). He was also president of the non-profit Italian Foundation ‘World of Breath’ since 2013.

At an international level, he served as head of the Clinical Assembly (1996-1998) and secretary general within the European Respiratory Society (ERS), president (2002-2006) of the Pneumology Section and Board of the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) (2002-2006), and member of the UEMS Management Council (2004-2006). He was also international governor of the Italian Chapter of the American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP) (2009-2012). Commended for his professional involvements, he was honored with numerous awards, most recently receiving a fellowship of the European Respiratory Society (FERS) and special recognition by AIPO.

The community of European pulmonologists certainly mourns the loss of a great professional and also recognizes his humanity. He had a life-long commitment to people and promoted services through the local Rotary Club which he joined and served as president in recent years.

It is very difficult to do him justice in this short obituary but we are firmly convinced that everyone who met and knew him during his life is now able to testify on his spectacular early vision for our medical specialty, so we all miss him in our community.

On the very last day of his life a journal published a commentary, co-authored by himself with international friends and experts, dealing with telemedicine as a new frontier to “*enhance and extend the management of care*” in respiratory patients.⁵ This illustrates his professional will for doctors to always look beyond the horizon and to never give up.

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Consent to publish data

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Conflicts of interest

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