



Introduction to the Italian section for young neurologists

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Received: 5 April 2019 / Accepted: 5 June 2019 / Published online: 14 June 2019
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Dear Editor-in-Chief,

The Italian Section for young neurologists (in Italian Sezione Italiana Giovani Neurologi - SIgN) was set up during the XIV Update Course of the Italian Society of Neurology (SIN), held in Pisa in 1998. It was created as part of a program launched within the European scientific community through the establishment of national young neurologists study groups. As this section eventually failed in the goal to create an operative network, during the XLVII Conference of SIN in Venice in 2016, the former President of SIN made an effort to engage young neurologists in SIN activities. After that meeting, since March 2017, a board of young neurologists and residents, including the authors of the present work, was constituted and a series of activities have been scheduled; consequently, more and more residents were included in this brand new network.

The objectives of the SIgN section were again established, starting from 4 main topics of educational models, research networking, residential training, career development:

- elaboration and application of educational models to optimize training of the future neurologists;
- improvement of the communication network between the residents of the various Italian and international universities with the aim to share research advances;

- organization of educational-training meetings;
- promotion of international professional exchanges and information related to job opportunities or scholarships for young Neurologists.

In more detail, purposes of SIgN are

- to represent postgraduates and young neurologists at the national level—through relations with SIN directive council and with individual residential schools—and at European level through the collaboration with the European Association of Young Neurologist (recently channeled into the European Academy of Neurology) [1];
- to foster training, making it more transparent and equal at a national level, promoting periodic quality check, and providing information of educational offer in different residency schools with sequent proposals inspired by the evolution of the neurological world;
- use of new technologies to promote research and scientific networking, to organize cultural exchanges for post-graduate students and young specialists, making it easier to attend structures other than their own;
- promoting the allocation of funds for this purpose and encouraging participation in congresses (SIN, ENS, EFNS, EAN, etc.);
- to provide information exchange about scientific possibilities and job opportunities through the creation of defined communication routes that can be used by those who propose job offers dedicated to neurologists and who want to find a job position of their own.

In less than 2 years, several proposals came true:

- Creation of a network among young Italian neurologists, supported by the creation of a centralized mailing list and WhatsApp© group with delegates from all different Italian residency schools;
- Organization, with the help of senior members of SIN, of a yearly national conference of young neurologists. Now

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in its third edition, this 2-day meeting is becoming one of the cornerstones for Italian residents in neurology giving the opportunity for active participation of young neurologists, entrusting them with the role of “Young Moderators”, alongside a senior ones, and of speakers in the round up and in the interactive clinical case presentation;

- Creation of a web magazine, www.neuromag.it, primarily directed not only at young neurologists in training but also with the goal to be a source of information for doctors and patients who want to stay up-to-date on of the greatest changes in the world of neurology;
- “Article of the month”, an initiative coordinated by two full professors: six residents from different schools choose the best article published in a shortlist of six different scientific journals each;
- Organization and management of monthly webinars held by experts with a didactic cut and focusing as much as possible on the state-of-the-art and on the possible immediate developments of current research. Webinars are open for discussion after the presentation. They are recorded to create an educational archive;
- Organization of workshop(s) during the annual SIN meeting.

Besides the above-mentioned activities, other actions have been undertaken, in order to better cope with the needs and ambitions of the Italian residents. Crucially, a tight collaboration with the Resident and Research Fellow Section (RRFS) of the European Academy of Neurology has been established to be constantly updated and involved with the activities held at a European level [2].

Then, a series of surveys, that we hope to spread and publish soon, have been performed to detect the current situation along all the Italian neurology residency schools. Among these, a recent topic has emerged and is fundamental in the future profession of neurologists: the introduction of training periods in the endovascular treatment (EVT) of acute ischemic stroke [3].

With the restoration of SIGN, residents in neurology and young neurologists have the opportunity to join various SIN activities with a recognized and recognizable role; this will allow greater possibilities for participation in research and in promoting the new and various educational activities.

The current quality of the training of neuroscientists will determine the quality of clinical practice of neurology in Italy in the next future. The rapidly growing knowledge in neuroscience and the emergent multiple sub-specialization areas are challenges for the adaptation ability of training programs. Lack of information on the local programs would mean more difficulties in guiding young graduates interested in pursuing a career in neurology. SIGN is giving an opportunity of connection among young neurology/residents allowing them to be active part of future changes in neurology. This initiative is part of a process that is taking place in different European countries [4], and we hope that Italian experience will stimulate the creation of similar groups in countries where there are still no associations of young Neurologists.

Compliance with ethical standards

Ethical standards This letter has been written according to the ethical standards.

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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