

IN MEMORIAM

Professor Antonio Liuzzi (1939-2013)



A prominent and enlightened scientist, a thoughtful and scrupulous clinician, a wise intellectual man. These few words could clearly delineate the figure of Professor Antonio Liuzzi.

Antonio passed away on April 6 at the age of 74, thus ending a career rich of outstanding scientific accomplishments, of secure leadership in clinical positions and of illuminating mentorship to students and patient-oriented researchers.

Antonio graduated in Medicine at the University of Milan (1964), obtained two post graduate degrees, in Internal Medicine (1969) and in Endocrinology and Metabolic Diseases (1972), both at the University of Pavia. In 1969 he also won the honor of professorship in Endocrinology. Antonio was trained as MD at the famous Institute of Internal Medicine of the University of Milan in the group of Professor Silvestrini. He soon realized and developed the concept that appropriate hormonal measurements would enable the clinician to better classify the different diseases in order to optimize their therapy, a concept that he kept in mind throughout his scientific life. In 1966 he followed his mentor, who moved to Niguarda Hospital to create the Endocrine Unit, and remained there until 1993. It is nice to mention that, at the very beginning of his duties at Niguarda Hospital, Antonio met Pier Giorgio Chiodini who was also joining the same team as Antonio. Since then, a strong and fruitful scientific collaboration and a memorable close friendship between the two young fellows were born and lasted for ever. During these years, Antonio has generated pioneering work in the field of pathophysiology of pituitary function with special reference to the control of GH and PRL secretions and to the medical treatments of acromegaly and prolactinomas. In this field, he has been an acclaimed authority; the results obtained in the treatment of acromegaly with levo-dopa provided the first demonstration of the inhibitory action

of dopaminergic drugs on GH secretion in acromegalic patients (JCEM, 1972), thus opening the way to a new strategy for the medical treatment of GH secreting pituitary adenomas. A few years later (1975), Antonio showed that the same therapeutical approach was also effective in treating prolactinomas. These findings, presented at the American Endocrine Society Meeting of that year, were soon confirmed by the team of Professor Besser, a highly recognized British clinician. In 1993 Antonio joined the Hospital "Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza" in San Giovanni Rotondo (Foggia) where he was offered the position of Head of the Division of Endocrinology. There, while continuing his career of expert clinician and of acute scientist in the area of pathophysiology of pituitary adenomas, he created and coordinated groups of young investigators interested in different areas of endocrinology such as thyroid diseases, bone metabolism and diabetes. After the years spent in Southern Italy, the "Istituto Auxologico Italiano" called him back to Northern Italy by granting him the leadership of the Division of Endocrinology at the San Giuseppe Hospital in Piancavallo (Verbania), an important branch of the Institute prevalently interested in the study of metabolic diseases (1996-2012). This was a stimulating challenge for Antonio, always ready to seize any new scientific opportunity with interest and enthusiasm, to get involved in areas of medicine different from those of his original scientific background. He has been far-sighted: indeed, obesity and its complications became in the following years a discipline of major scientific and social interest. In the last years, while continuing his scientific career, he also assumed administrative responsibilities. His major scientific activities significantly contributed to the advancement of knowledge in the field of pituitary adenomas and of metabolic disorders. His researches, performed with the utmost severity and with the most up-to-date available methodologies he had contributed to develop, generated the publication of about 300 peer reviewed papers in qualified International Journals and of several Chapters for International Textbooks. For his scientific achievements, Antonio was able to make profitable collaborations with internationally qualified investigators and has regularly been invited to the major International Congresses of Endocrinology. Antonio never refused teaching duties and participated as brilliant teacher to many courses mainly for post graduate medical students. He was noted and appreciated for his clarity of thought, his endless pursuit of excellence and his abiding interest in trying to integrate as much as possible basic knowledges with clinical approaches. He was a person kind to everybody, always ready to offer deep assistance and sincere advices. For all these reasons, he has been instrumental for the career of many young investigators who have been given the privilege to work closely with him. Some of his pupils reached important clinical positions. In the editorial field, Antonio has been a co-founder and served for more than a decade as Associate Editor (1978-1990) of the *Journal of Endocrinological Investigation*. He also edited a monograph on "GH regulation", a useful and appreciated textbook for medical doctors, in particular for endocrinologists.

Professor Liuzzi, Antonio, "Liù" (a very friendly nickname), you will be remembered by all who have closely interacted with you as an outstanding scientist, a clinician of exceptional capability and humanity and a man of ethical integrity and intellectual honesty. But above all, you will be remembered as a faithful, unforgettable, really a wonderful friend.

Marcella Motta and Giuseppe Oppizzi

Message from the Publisher

Editrice Kurtis joins the Italian and the international scientific community in the grief for the loss of a brilliant scientist and a high-principled man, Prof. Antonio Liuzzi, one of the founders of the *Journal of Endocrinological Investigation*.

Canzio Fusè and Alessia Fusè
President and Vice-President - Editrice Kurtis