



Giuseppe Gagliardi, Editor Emeritus in memoriam, 1962–2022

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The sudden death of Giuseppe Gagliardi left the entire world of colorectal surgery in profound shock. Giuseppe had faced the fact that he was severely ill with extreme realism, as the scientist he was, but also with optimism to the end. Indeed, none of us who talked to him in the last few weeks expected what happened, demonstrating that Giuseppe had enormous inner strength. If we look back on his life, he could not have been otherwise.

Born in Naples on September 29, 1962, he was the son of an entrepreneur and a psychoanalyst. He graduated in 1988 in his hometown, and here he also trained in General Surgery. But this was not enough for him. In those years, a visit to St. Mark's, the temple of colorectal surgery, was a must for those who wanted to focus on the colon and rectum. At St Mark's he entered the hearts of the staff, especially of Peter Hawley, with whom he worked extensively and published several articles. Of particular note are two articles on prognostic factors of rectal cancer, published in 1995 in the *BJS*.

Although a humble man, Giuseppe was restless and always looking to develop his career. He became licensed to practice in the United States and moved there. He worked in several prestigious locations and gradually enriched his immense cultural background, learning clinical skills from the best surgeons and, at the same time, dealing with science with a capital S. He also found his wife. Still, this was not enough to prevent him from missing home, and he tried to come back to Italy.

He attended several Italian universities without finding the place where he could put into practice everything that he had learnt. It was Mario Pescatori who gave him an opportunity that came close to his expectations, welcoming him to Rome at Villa Flaminia. That union was fundamental for Giuseppe for several reasons. The ethos of Mario Pescatori is known to all. I firmly believe their discussions of complex

clinical cases, new proposed techniques or revisiting past techniques would have been incredibly stimulating. But this relationship was precious to all of us because Mario involved Giuseppe in definitively launching the journal “Techniques in Coloproctology”. Giuseppe's skills were central to the growth of this journal ever since.

It was at this point that I was lucky enough to get to know him well, when I became his assistant. Giuseppe was an extremely scrupulous person with a great eagerness to learn. He worked on the journal night and day. Despite his move back to the States, to Tulane University in Louisiana, we were in contact practically every day. Although he continued to have strong ties with Italy, the American system suited his true ambitions best.

After years of hard work, ranging from editing individual articles, the search for valid and reliable reviewers, and even the minutiae of the layout of the articles, the first Impact Factor arrived in 2013. We were ecstatic. No one could ever have imagined such a success. It was the deserved recognition of a career made of rigor, science and righteous ambition. In a short time, under the direction of Giuseppe, *Techniques in Coloproctology* had begun to compete with journals in the same field but without the benefit of being the official journal of very important scientific societies with an unapproachable tradition behind them. Most of the credit for the success of *Techniques in Coloproctology* should go to one man, Giuseppe, who was so committed to its improvement and development.

Not surprisingly, one of his most popular presentations, which he gave in Turin a few years ago, was entitled “To publish or not to publish. The Editor's dilemma”. It reminded me of all the times we discussed what to do with each article we received.

Back in the States, his clinical practice grew considerably, and he had the opportunity to move to Chicago and become an Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois in 2016. There he spent the last years of his life, plagued by illness, without ever revealing how ill he was, even to his closest friends. His reserved nature was reflected in his profound interest in Eastern philosophy, consisting of frequent

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meditation, respect for others, and the ability to listen. Many years ago, he embraced the Buddhist religion along with committed veganism, demonstrations of his deep ethical and moral rigor, which he also manifested in his professional life and in the direction of this journal.

Giuseppe could have published much more, given his immense culture and his tireless desire for knowledge. He chose to write just a few articles, all of incredible importance in our field. This is the main legacy he leaves us. For a life as a true scientist, you need the "fire of science" and the scientific method. The second can be learned, the first not, you must be born with it, and Giuseppe was.

Giuseppe was a true friend and an example for many of us. It is up to us to ensure that he continues to be an inspiration even for those who did not have, as we did, the privilege of knowing him and valuing his friendship. He will be missed.

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