

GUEST EDITORIAL



This special issue of *Acta Dermato-Venereologica*, the official journal of the European Society for Dermatology and Psychiatry (ESDaP), is dedicated to one of the founders of ESDaP, Professor Emiliano Panconesi, who passed away on 18 March 2014, at the age of 91 years. He was also among the founders of the European Academy for Dermatology and Venereology and the first president of this highly regarded professional

association. His beloved wife Diana was his life-long partner, manager and English translator, and she provided him with constant support, motivation and comfort.

Emiliano was never happy with the term “Psychodermatology” and, utilizing his profound and extensive knowledge of art and literature, he coined the phrase “Psychosomatic Dermatology”.

When he conceived the idea for an international meeting that would be confined to questions of psychosomatic dermatology, he discussed the concept with the former head of the Vienna University Hospital of Psychiatry, Peter Berner, and together they developed the innovative professional association, ESDaP. Michael Musalek, a well-known psychiatrist from Vienna and collaborator of Professor Berner, became the first Secretary at a meeting in Vienna in 1984, which is where Uwe Gieler first had the pleasure of meeting Emiliano. His good humour, easy communication and Italian culture were immediately apparent and would engage so many dermatologists, psychiatrists and psychologists who have played a role in the evolution of psychodermatology. He was a medical doctor in the fullest sense of the word, showing passion and interest in all things human, from science to literature, from music to paintings and languages. Some of us remember, for instance, how, shortly

before becoming ill, he showed pride in having started learning Russian. Or how, during a congress on psychosomatic dermatology, a presentation dedicated to the symbolic meaning of hair in Hindu culture raised his interest and he immediately underlined the importance of mingling of different cultures and disciplines. His never-ending curiosity and love of knowledge was inspiring to all those who were fortunate enough to have met him. Nobody could be a better role model than Emiliano for how doctors should address patients. He was, and always will be, a pride to our profession.

Emiliano inspired a multitude of scientists and clinicians, who instigated new ideas and diagnostic therapies for dermatology. He was one of the first to put forward a vision on the relationship between the skin and the brain. His book, *Stress and Skin Disease: Psychosomatic Dermatology* (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott; 1984) reflected this vision. The book described the most important dermatological aspects of skin diseases and set out a future for psychoneuroimmunology, one of Emiliano’s favoured research interests. As Professor of Dermatology at the University Clinic in Florence, he was responsible for a wide range of research projects and published more than 100 papers.

We are dedicating this supplement of *Acta Dermato-Venereologica* to Emiliano in honour of his work as a pioneer in the field of psychodermatology; he was a groundbreaker in the search for the correlation between stress and skin disease and links between the immune system, emotional factors and the skin.

The authors of this supplement were more than happy to use their most recent research in memory of the man and his ideas. They hope to illustrate the significance of his efforts and show the importance of his theories and concepts. We are proud that this issue offers such a large range of articles concerning psychodermatological research. The ESDaP editors and the authors of the articles wish to pay homage to Emiliano, his life and his work.

Since *Acta Dermato-Venereologica* is the journal of ESDaP, our editors aim to publish articles of outstanding scientific interest and rigour. We have published many papers on psychodermatology in the last years and would like to think that we have made a contribution to the development of the discipline, which was so fortunate to be served by a figure of such magnitude as Emiliano Panconesi.

The editors and authors of this supplement wish to express their sincere gratitude to Anders Vahlquist, Editor-in-chief of *Acta Dermato-Venereologica* for his constant encouragement in pursuing this project. Our awareness that he was overseeing our work in his discrete and attentive way has made us feel more secure and confident. Also, we are all deeply indebted to Agneta Andersson and Anna-Maria Andersson, without whose dedication, enormous patience and friendly engagement the supplement in memory of Emiliano Panconesi would have never become reality.

Ciao Emiliano! We hope that this supplement celebrates the way in which your vision became a reality.



Professor Emiliano Panconesi and his wife, Diana, at the 2005 ESDaP Congress in Giessen, Germany.

Uwe Gieler
(ESDaP President)

Lucia Tomas-Aragones
(ESDaP President-Elect)

Dennis Linder
(Former ESDaP President)