

## HISTORY OF HOMOEOPATHY IN ITALY

The development of Homoeopathy in Italy was controversial and intricate in every region of the country since the early 19th century. Based on the doctrine that unsettled the principles of the "Old School", the Hahnemannian thought made rapidly converts in Italy. Homoeopathy became a court medicine and developed widely after the publication of Hahnemann's works, coming mostly from France and edited by Leon Simon. The first translation of the "Organon" was issued in Italy in 1824. As rapidly as Homoeopathy expanded from 1820 onwards, so early a few principles of the Hahnemannian doctrine (for instance the theory of the miasms, or chronic diseases) were confuted and questioned by the homoeopaths of the first generation. In parallel to an elitist development, Homoeopathy became a popular medicine as well and was often of great help in course of epidemics (especially cholera epidemics), as shown by substantial data still available that report thousands of cases cured homoeopathically in different regions of Italy from 1836 to 1867.

For instance Zoe Gatti, a Genoese homoeopath, cured a lot of patients of cholera and later he examines the sick free of charge, in conformity with his social view of medicine. According to the description of Italian homeopaths reported in Rapou's treatise "History of Homoeopathy Medicine", published in Paris in 1847 and regarded as a major scientific document, the homoeopathic physicians in Italy were about 500 in Based on Brown's and Rasori's medical doctrine, the methods of the predominant and conventional medicine were interventionist and some times frankly brutal (blood-lettings, purgatives and emetics). That's why Homoeopathy, that was founded on the opposite principles (vitalism), was regarded as a threatening rival. Homoeopathy flourished in Italy from 1820 to 1840, especially in the Kingdom of Naples where the Bourbonists promoted the new system of medicine. A major role was played by Francis I who, after ascending the throne in 1825, choose Cosmo Maria De Horatiis, an able and enthusiastic homoeopath, as his own doctor. Cosmo Maria De Horatiis carried out several clinical experiments and verified the action of homoeopathic remedies under the control of allopaths, who openly boycotted the good results he was getting from Homoeopathy. Meanwhile the homoeopathic medicine was expanding all over the world, and especially in France where the Italian physician Sebastiano De Guidi contributed greatly for building the homoeopathic hospital in Paris (1847-62). A few years before another famous Italian, doctor Giuseppe Belloumini, was among the first to practise Homoeopathy in the United Kingdom, where he became the physician of the Royal Family. Starting from 1830, homoeopathy achieved good results in Sicily where one of the most distinguished homoeopaths was Benedetto Mure. Coming from Lyons, he was first cured of tuberculosis by homoeopathic remedies and later took a medical degree in order to practise and spread this system of medicine. After spending a few years in Sicily, he travelled first to Brazil where he made the principles of Homoeopathy known and later to Egypt, Sudan and France. In every country he always practised as a successful and fervent homoeopath. Thanks to his cultural heritage, the "Accademia Omiopatica di Sicilia" was founded in Sicily in 1844. At the same time, the King Ferdinand II institutionalised the teaching of Homoeopathy in Italy for the first time. The Accademia is still operating in Palermo. The Pontifical State where Professor Ettore Mengozzi - the author of an interesting "Materia Medica" - was appointed to a Vatican professorship by Pio IX. He didn't lead a comfortable life and later was even accused of poisoning his patients. Professor Mengozzi kept his professorship only for a few days because the historical

events of 1848 induced the Pope to move to Gaeta. In spite of all his misadventures, however, Mengozzi succeeded in founding the Royal Homoeopathic Institute of Naples on 1864. Homoeopathy developed also in other regions of Italy such as Piedmont, Lombardo-Veneto and Tuscany. After a first period of expansion, the Italian homoeopathic medicine entered upon a long stage of decline while in the American continent homoeopathy reached the best of its splendour in the late 19th century. In Italy, the unification of the country in 1870 brought about a comprehensive revision of the legislation in force, and all that had a great influence on medical matters. We have to point out, however that the opposition to Homoeopathy was more focused on clinical, scientific and philosophical aspects than on the legal ones. The decline of Homoeopathy in Italy was brought about by several causes such as the hostility of the institutions, strongly based on mechanist principles, and the lack of continuity in the homoeopathic profession. As a consequence, in the early 20th century the Italian homoeopaths were only a few dozens. Not being recognised as a system of medicine by the law, homoeopathy could not even fulfil the opportunity of a full development as a mass and popular medicine. In that period, therefore, the Italian homoeopaths lived a condition of social and cultural outcasting and shut themselves in the half-clandestine defense of their principles...In early 20th century Tommaso Cigliano, among the others, took up again the tradition of Homoeopathy in Naples, published some works and the pharmacological research about homoeopathic remedies. In 1927, the compilation of the Homoeopathic Official Pharmacopoeia brought up the same questions that are still unsolved in the homoeopathic pharmacodynamics. The Pharmacopoeia was edited on the base of the model in force in the United States, thanks to the activity of the brothers Mattoli from Perugia, who strongly pursued the aim of spreading and promoting Homoeopathy. But the Official Pharmacopoeia, being approved by a Royal Decree on December 30th 1923, was never issued. After the First World War the Homoeopathy came to a dead end, which was mostly due to the influence of social events on the matters of medicine. The true revival of Homoeopathy in Italy took only place in the seventies when this medical system gained ground in the urban areas, either as a complementary or an alternative medicine. In Europe and Italy the germ of the revival is represented by the students of Pierre Schmidt and by the development of the schools of Homoeopathy, such as that founded by Antonio Negro and Alma Rodriguez in Naples - the Free International University of Homoeopathic Medicine (LUIMO) - in co-operation with Proceso Sanchez Ortega and Pablo Paschero. The LMHI gave a decisive contribution to the expansion of Homoeopathy in Italy as well and organised two congresses in Rome (1980) and Capri (1996). As to educational activities, we would like to underline the crucial contribution offered by Jacques Imberechts (Homoeopathia Europea), who established different homoeopathic groups and organised workshops in various Italian towns. Only in the last few years, Homoeopathy has started establishing its own independent organisation in Italy. Since 1990 the FIAMO (Federazione Italiana delle Associazioni e dei Medici Omeopatici) has been carrying out the institutional representation of the homoeopaths, especially in consideration of conforming the Italian Homoeopathy to European rules.