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Editorial

The knowledge cannot have borders: the new challenges of SIE

The recent deconstruction of traditional teaching and research activities has created a moment of great perplexity among professors of all the academic disciplines.

In fact, the guidelines carried out by the ministerial technical committees, basically aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19, have been mainly based on “social distancing” and “distance learning”.

Already in 2011, an article published in *Nature* highlighted how “the Internet-based degree programs are gaining acceptance, but doubts remain about their suitability for graduate science”. However, in the recent years, the growth of online universities, FAD (Distance Learning) courses and webinars, has contributed to making the opinion on such teaching methods (and learning methods, of course) carried out through IT-platforms definitely less hostile. Nonetheless, today the real challenge is to ensure a reliable and effective “hands-on” training, the main training that characterizes and creates professional savoir-faire in clinical practice.

Nowadays, the scientific societies, together with the universities, can no longer neglect this aspect, and must know how to interpret this strong need from an incoercible necessity: the SARS-CoV2 pandemic.

Zygmunt Bauman was the first to define modern society as a “liquid society”, and this status is expressed in the concept “that the changing is the only permanent thing, and that the uncertainty is the only certainty”.

Therefore, everything flows (*panta rei*) as Heraclitus said in his famous metaphor describing the immobile but always changing river flow. Similarly, the role of the Universities and the Scientific Societies is to manage the changes “sooner and better” of the subjects who will suffer the consequences of such changes: in this landscape, it is necessary and indispensable to maintain the quality of training excellent, as it has always been in Italy regarding the dental disciplines.

Undoubtedly, Italian dentistry has always been a quality model, a precursor of the best techniques and technologies, pioneer of the most effective experimental procedures: today we are called to combine the old concept of teaching in presence, with the need of distance learning.

SIE has already welcomed this challenge with great enthusiasm: for the first time, the SIE Endodontic Week has been organized (3-7 November 2020) with free webinars, where clinical dentistry topics will be addressed very close-to-patient practice.

The promise is not to stop knowledge, and not to give up on our quality.

Indeed, the sincere hope is to return to teaching and training activities “in person”, because a computer can also be an excellent way of transferring information, but it can never replace the enthusiasm of a conference, and it can never replace the empathy of an *ex-cathedra* lesson. Therefore, knowledge must be considered a “product”, just like such products resulting from industrial activities: we can assert that knowledge is undoubtedly the main “asset” of academia and scientific societies and must be protected and valued.

In conclusion, I want to greet all SIE Members with a warm see you soon... hopefully, being able to meet again in person.

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