

## Volume 16, Issue 1/2014 - Country Focus: Italy

### Politics, Economics and Technology in Healthcare :ANMDO Scientific Activity Report 2013

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#### Authors:

**Ugo Luigi Aparo**

*Scientific Secretary*

*Gianfranco Finzi*

*President*

*ANMDO – National Association of Hospital Medical Directors*

The National Congress is the main scientific event of the Italian National Association of Hospital Medical Directors. Last year the 39th ANMDO national congress was held on September 25 to 27 in Rome. The theme was "Politics, Economics and Technology: Healthcare for what?" The event was attended by about 450 people, including medical doctors and other professionals in the healthcare sector.

The theme of the congress was inspired by the period of great changes that we are currently experiencing in Italy and in many western industrialised countries. It is a difficult time with a lot of focus on public spending and spending reviews. The formal definition of a "spending review" is as follows: "a process intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the state apparatus in the management of public expenditure, through systematic analysis and evaluation of organisational structures, decision-making procedures and implementation of individual acts within programmes". Some interpretations of the term spending review could come to the conclusion that healthcare is a huge drain on national finance and therefore justify indiscriminate cuts. Italy is heading in that direction and it goes without saying that ANMDO does not agree at all with this approach.

Healthcare is an essential competence and component of modern social systems. It is planned by political decision and experiences economic and technological developments. Healthcare is not a financial black hole. On the contrary, it plays an essential role in sustaining economic growth. However, it is clearly necessary to rethink the current methods of management. Hospitals and healthcare must evolve to go hand in hand with scientific progress.

We have witnessed over the centuries the transformation of management methods and the continual emergence of new management tools. Until not long ago, there was time to learn how to make the best use of them. Today things have changed. We must act in real time. We need to match their evolution in real time, looking into professional fields other than our own. We have to check if they can be used to advantage in the healthcare domain.

ANMDO, fostering the continuous improvement of the cultural heritage of the Italian Hospital Medical Directors, promotes the acquisition of innovative skills and competences. Therefore, ANMDO urges its members to never take anything for granted, and to explore, without hesitation, new uncharted territories. It may be risky but there is also great potential.

With the intent to outline the existing framework in which healthcare organisations operate, a PEST analysis was performed. This was done in order to highlight the most relevant variables and factors that have to be taken into consideration in the decision-making processes, strategic planning, and operational decisions. The same set of variables and factors can be used to sketch possible future scenarios and identify the main discontinuities that will challenge hospital medical directors and those in managerial positions in the healthcare sector.

The goal is to add effective new tools to the already well-equipped management toolbox, which healthcare players should be aware of and use. To reach this result, ANMDO believes that it is crucial to enter into a dialogue with directors from hospitals across Europe.

#### Politics, Economics and Technology and European Healthcare

One session of congress was dedicated to a discussion on "Politics, Economics and Technology in European Healthcare" in which representatives of the European Association of Hospital Managers (EAHM) participated. The session was co-moderated by the ANMDO Scientific Secretary, Prof. Ugo Luigi Aparo and by the ANMDO Secretary General Prof. Karl Kob.

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The panel included Gerry O'Dwyer (Ireland), Frederic Boiron (France), Danielle Rossi-Turk (Belgium), Juraj Gemes (Slovakia), Mieczyslaw Pasowicz (Poland) and the ANMDO National Vice President, Prof. Gabriele Pelissero.

The session proved to be very inspiring, and made the point that almost all European countries are struggling with similar problems. European countries can act together to find new solutions, to provide European citizens with equitable, accessible, top-quality healthcare systems.

ANMDO is currently working on defining the final details of the scientific programme of the 2014 congress. ANMDO's 40th national congress will take place in Naples on October 21 and 22, and its title is "Rethinking Health: Strategic Role and Responsibilities of the Health Departments". It will focus on less for more: less resources for more, better outcome, to obtain the best care at lower costs.

The congress will identify the key elements needed to design and implement an innovative strategy that takes into account the depletion in resources and allows for the definition of a totally patient-centred healthcare system, organised on the basis of his/her needs. ANMDO is confident that EAHM, already engaged in the development of IMPO, a new management tool, will bring a great contribution to the 40th ANMDO national Congress, emphasising the key role that Europe, as an integrated system, plays.

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