

Ten years of the Interuniversity Institute of Myology

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Abstract

The Interuniversity Institute of Myology (IIM) has been formally approved in late autumn 2003 by the University of Chieti Board of the first Director, Giorgio Fanò. Many Italian Myologists, coming from Italian Universities such as Università degli Studi di Chieti, Università degli Studi di Brescia, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Università degli Studi di Messina, Università degli Studi di Milano, Università degli Studi di Padova, Università degli Studi di Pavia, Università degli Studi di Perugia, Università degli Studi di Roma 'La Sapienza', Università degli Studi di Siena, who excel in Myology Research, recognized IIM and its potentiality for international joined collaboration.

Key Words: muscle physiology, biophysics, E-C coupling, homeostasis, differentiation, aging, atrophy, sarcopenia, cancer cachexia, stem and satellite cells, muscle dystrophies

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The Italian Interuniversity Institute of Myology (IIM) has been formally approved in late autumn 2003 by the University of Chieti. Its first Board of Directors was chaired by Giorgio Fanò Illic, who had the initiative and the strength to achieve this goal. Many Italian Myologists, coming from several Italian Universities such as Università degli Studi di Chieti, Università degli Studi di Brescia, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Università degli Studi di Messina, Università degli Studi di Milano, Università degli Studi di Padova, Università degli Studi di Pavia, Università degli Studi di Perugia, Università degli Studi di Roma 'La Sapienza', Università degli Studi di Siena, all prestigious institutions with strong tradition of Myology Research, joined and formally recognized IIM as the Italian Interuniversity Institute for Myology and its potentials for joined international collaboration. The Scientific Advisory Board, established to support the Director Giorgio Fanò Illic, was formed by Ugo Carraro with the role of Vice-Director and the elected

members (R Bottinelli; P Bruni; G Cecchi; F Eusebi; F Felici; G Mazzoleni; A Musarò; C Orizio; F Protasi; C Reggiani; V Sorrentino; F Trimarchi; A Uncini; A Veicsteinas; P Volpe) from the five Research Units in which IIM was structured *ab origine*.

More than ten years ago the main purpose of the project was to stimulate, set and strengthen relations among who were interested in research aspects of the vast field of myology. To reach this goal, collaborations between basic and applied researchers have to be set up, recognizing that it is a losing game to play in narrow and personal field. Essential part of this philosophy, was to establish "institutional paths" to allow young people to have many introductory ways to myology research, even after graduation, implementing coordinated PhD, Internships, Specialization, etc. among the Courses already active in the IIM Universities.

During the past decade an Annual Meeting have always been organized, with a constant presence of more than one hundred researchers, particularly young fellows. Also thanks to these meetings about 240 papers were published in the most prestigious scientific Journals, in which the IIM appeared as affiliation of one or more authors. Some of these are randomly listed in the references section [1-16]. The latest edition of the meeting had reached the peak record of 68 abstracts pooled and discussed under the following topics proposed by the organizing committee:



Fig 1. The logo



Fig 2. The vast majority of the participants of the IIM Meetings are very young. The few exception are Vincenzo Sorrentino, whose few-hair profile appears in the third row, and Giorgio Fanò Illic knelt down in between Antonella D'Alfonso and Roberto Bottinelli. Near to them are Marco Sandri and Antonio Musarò. Who recognize her/his-self in this picture, is kindly requested to send an e-mail to the *ejtmBAM* Editor. IIM Board members are willing to record as many names as possible, in preparation for celebration of a future IIM Anniversary.

- Muscle physiology, biophysics and E-C coupling
- Regulation of muscle homeostasis and differentiation
- Satellite cells and muscle regeneration
- Muscle atrophy, sarcopenia and aging
- Muscle wasting and cancer cachexia
- Muscular dystrophies and related diseases
- New routes towards heart myogenesis

The audience in front of which the abstracts were discussed was made up of nearly 150 participants including many from several European Countries. The merits of such a success go not only to the last two directors that have been in charge during last years: Roberto Bottinelli and Antonio Musarò, but also to anyone, firstly being in the Advisory Board (M Sampaolesi, L Vitiello, D Rossi, MA Bagni, P Lorenzon, D Danieli-Betto, G Sorci, M Sandri, M Bizzarri, F Naro), who have helped to ensure the IIM become a sound scientific presence, and not only for Italy. The annual meetings are the IIM richness and power. They have been the means through which we have established knowledge and enthusiasm that have

allowed us to both strength collaborations, and to "recruit" young researchers even in tough times like those we are now confronting.

During the last Meeting in Borgo San Luigi, Montiriggioni (Siena), between a "Ribollita" and a taste of "Cinta Senese" meats, Antonio Musarò was re-elected director for another three years and, with him was also selected the new Advisory Board on which are represented the elected members from the three research units in which IIM is organized today (E. Barbieri, G. Sorci; D. Gabellini; C. Mammucari; PL. Puri; B. Blaauw; S. Fulle; F. Grassi).

What we did, and have to do despite hard times:

- Grants for Post-doc: It's a small incentive, attractive for young people. We were able to establish this possibility only twice during the first 10 years. The second time only thanks to personal funds of generous members of the Scientific Council. In my opinion, every effort should be made to revive this possibility.

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Fig 3. Along the first ten years annual meetings were organized by the showed colleagues.

What we were not able to implement:

- Specific funding for "IIM" projects: the only unrealized point of the original proposed program. However, even if we were not able to find new resources, collaboration among members of IIM has been extremely effective to obtain grants from public and private grant agencies.
- Editorial resources.
For various reasons (the main being the fact that, despite obtaining an Impact Factor, the Journal that is closer to us never achieved inclusion in

PUBMED data base), our community of Myologists have not supported as much as we could the journal Basic and Applied Myology (BAM), now the European Journal of Translational Myology (EJTM), whose founder and editor, Ugo Carraro, is a founding partner of IIM (see Figure 4).

It is time, now, for all of us to look near to publish ideas, commentaries (wheter canonical or not), interim reports and conclusive results of our work and Graduation, Medical Specialty and PhD Thesis. Congratulations to all IIM members and ... see you soon, somewhere, for the next anniversary!



Fig 4. In the Tyrrhenian Sea toward Palermo and Stromboli for the prerelease of the IIM's birth, two of the future opinion leaders: Antonio Musarò (on the left) and Ugo Carraro discuss how to "kill" the boss-in-charge Giorgio Fanò Illic



Fig 5. Twelve years later, Antonio Musarò, IIM Director-in-charge and Antonella D'Alfonso, IIM Secretary, prepare and signe Attendance Certificates of the 10th IIM Meeting, Borgo San Luigi, Monteriggioni (Siena), Italy, October 10-13, 2013

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