

Milan 2015: creating a safer, healthier, and sustainable world

Milano 2015; creare un mondo più sicuro, più sano e più sostenibile

There are always many reasons why one should visit Milan. Some may come for its art, such as Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper. Some may come for the opera at the world-famous La Scala. Others may come for the shopping, in via Montenapoleone, or to enjoy the beauty of the nearby Italian lakes and mountains.

In 2015 there are even more reasons to come to Milan. It is the setting for EXPO 2015, a vast complex in which the countries of the world demonstrate their commitment to "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life". This provides an appropriate backdrop for two other major events concerned with the health and well-being of our societies, at national and European level. Two major conferences will be held in parallel at the Milan Conference Centre (MiCo). These are the 48th National Congress of the Italian Society of Hygiene, Preventive Medicine and Public Health (SItl) and the 8th European Public Health (EPH) Conference, which showcases the work of the 14,000 members of the much younger European Public Health Association.

All three of these events recognize the enormous challenges that face our societies, in Italy, Europe, and the world. Indeed, it would be impossible to ignore them. Every day images appear on television screens and in newspapers of the horrors of war, in Ukraine, North Africa, and the Middle East, or its consequences, with thousands already having drowned in the Mediterranean. There are also challenges nearer to home, as the imposition of austerity policies leaves a generation of young people without the opportunities that their parents and grandparents had to gain a step on the ladder to employment and security.

Yet these three events also offer hope for the future. At EXPO 2015 one can enter row after row of imaginatively designed national pavilions displaying ideas and innovations that can contribute to food security for a growing world population, such as the celebration of beauty and biodiversity in the Italian pavilion, or the opportunity, in the United Kingdom's pavilion, to imagine oneself as one of the bees, whose pollination is essential for a third of everything we eat.

The two public health conferences will bring together researchers, teachers, and practitioners, with the shared goal of giving Italy, and Europe, a better, healthier, and more secure future. Speakers will describe new ways of making the invisible visible. They will draw attention to the needs of vulnerable pop-

ulations. They will explore ever more imaginative approaches to exploiting the wealth of data about how we live our lives. They will offer many lessons on what works to improve health and, as importantly, what does not. And they will discuss new ways to translate this evidence into policy and practice.

In these ways, both SItl and EUPHA will demonstrate their commitment to making our societies better places in which to live, creating a world in which threats to health are anticipated and confronted and where policies are informed by evidence. They will demonstrate their determination to strengthen public health capacity, both among the workforce of today and among future generations. But above all, they will provide an opportunity for shared learning, exploiting the remarkable natural laboratories provided by the 20 Italian regions and the 53 countries of the European region.

This supplement of *Epidemiologia & Prevenzione* contributes to this process. It showcases some of the best studies presented at the 48th National Congress of SItl, with 26 papers summarizing presentations in the main conference sessions (plenary and workshops), 9 reviews written by SItl working groups, and over 12 original papers selected from the best abstracts presented. Papers have been published in English, the international language of science, to place work of the highest quality by Italian researchers, working at all levels and in all parts of the country, on the European stage.

For centuries, scholars, writers, musicians, and scientists have come to Italy for inspiration. Copernicus, Goethe, Ibsen, Keats, Wagner – the list is almost endless and the legacy is apparent in the most unexpected places, such as the Padua children's ward in the English hospital named after William Harvey, who studied in that city and discovered the circulation of the blood. Now it is the turn of Europe's public health community to draw inspiration from all that this remarkable country has to offer.

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