

In memoriam: Maurizio Spella, M.D.

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Maurizio Spella had an important role in the journal “*Pelviperineology*”. My relationship with him began about thirty years ago when he enthusiastically accepted to collaborate on an initiative that I had called Pelvic Floor Digest. In the 90s I realized that the multidisciplinary view of the pelvic floor needed cultural support and that it was necessary to exchange information between specialists in the fields of urology, gynaecology and coloproctology through a well-coordinated selection of articles from the main journals of the three specialties. Maurizio helped me to organize this collection online. Those years saw the beginning of the great diffusion of internet, and when systematic searches on the web were simplified, obtaining the same results automatically, Maurizio collaborated to transform the old coloproctology journal into “*Pelviperineologia*”, trying to achieve a similar result in another way. The management of the journal, with the digest as a section, was very gradual and simple, based above all on passion, scientific and clinical curiosity.

Only after Bruce Farnsworth proposed the English version and therefore the internationalization of the journal, Maurizio began to take on the task of creating the system for receiving articles in an innovative way. The creation of iSubmit was due to him, to his creativity and experience in information technology. His idea was to transform the system into a real publisher that from the manuscript and the collection of the articles, through the entire editorial process, only required the evaluations of the chief editor.

Unfortunately, his premature death did not allow him to see the complete realization of this ambitious project. Once completed, it would have been the synthesis of a single vision, managing to merge software, medical and editorial aspects: putting data security and software stability first, creating a system that was expandable without set limits, taking care of the user interface with maniacal precision. With regard to this last aspect, Maurizio was studying rather innovative systems - rarely seen in other software in this field - to compare the



Maurizio Spella, M.D. (1962–2021)

articles, make corrections, and overall facilitate the entire management of an article from writing to publication, allowing even small scientific organizations to publish a scientific journal in a cheap but professional way.

Maurizio was not only a doctor with a passion for computer science. He was a person of extraordinary humanity and a boundless medical culture. His mind was like an immense server in which with extreme ease and mnemonic capacity any notion, information and feeling was processed with exceptional speed, efficiency and generous availability, always offering brilliant solutions and proposing to his friends and collaborators the absolute novelties of his invention. Alongside this, his great modesty, even in the silent awareness of his abilities, meant that he was in no way interested in appearing, reasoning more and more with his heart than with material and economic interests.

His family events led him to leave the hospital where he could expect a brilliant career in general medicine. The incredible attention with which he followed some of his close relatives with highly disabling diseases, starting with his mother, had led him to transform his house into a real intensive care unit that, helped by Maria Teresa, his wife, a doctor as well, he managed with amazing competence. Their death had produced in him a sense of loneliness and defeat, unjustified in the opinion of those who knew and loved him, because this seemed to us a struggle against the events of nature, a struggle in which he acted with passion and dedication of a

saint. The extraordinary thing is that shortly after the fatal CVA that hit him on Christmas Eve, the elderly father also passed away, as if he could not survive deprived of Maurizio's presence, attention and assiduous care, and the funeral ceremony was celebrated together for the father and the son, while Maurizio's organs were donated, with a gesture of great generosity, by his family.

Also, his spirit and his teachings will continue to live in all of us who have known him through his work and his ideas. There is also hope that his editorial vision, in the tumultuous progress of the web, can become a reality.