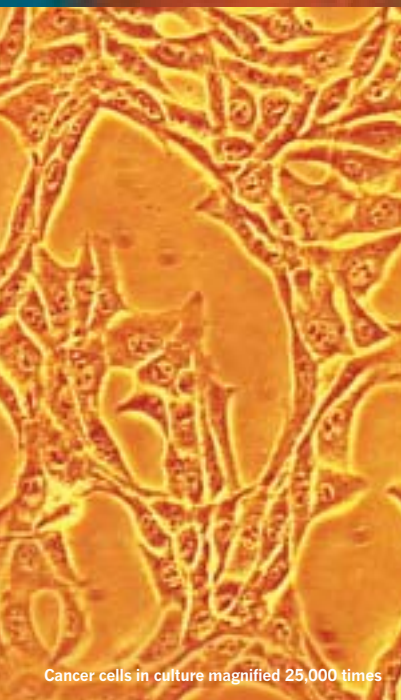


Targeting cancer with pinpoint accuracy

Novartis is helping turn the tide in the fight against cancer.



Cancer cells in culture magnified 25,000 times

Advances in genomic research bring the battle down to the cellular level, where cancer's weak spots can be identified and exploited.

Today, researchers and patients have new hope against cancer, the disease that takes many forms and many lives. By identifying cancer genes and their related metabolic processes we are learning how to develop highly specific compounds and therapies that can eliminate malignant cells without harming healthy tissues. This is not mere theory – we are applying it everyday. Already some specific forms of cancer have been transformed from killers into manageable diseases, allowing patients to enjoy good quality of life. But there is much to learn and much to do. And we are working hard to leverage our knowledge against the major forms of cancer today and in the near future.

Think what's possible.



SIFO, the Italian national association representing the interests of hospital pharmacy and pharmaceutical services

The Italian Hospital Pharmacy Association (*Società Italiana di Farmacia Ospedaliera e dei Servizi Farmaceutici delle Aziende Sanitarie - SIFO*) is a national cultural and scientific association of hospital pharmacists and the pharmaceutical services provided by local health units (LHUs). It alone represents almost all public pharmacies contracted to the national health service (SSN) but also those of private hospital institutions. The SIFO was founded on 14th June 1952 and has its headquarters in Milan. So last year it celebrated its half a century of existence on the occasion of the convention that took place on 27th September 2002 in Milan on the theme: "SIFO, 50 years – Remembering the past in order to understand the present and plan for the future".

The association is mainly concerned with the promotion and co-ordination of the scientific, technical and administrative actions of hospital pharmacies in order to improve professional standards. It also undertakes to monitor, keep up to date and improve the resources available to hospital pharmacists for the development, production and distribution of medicines. Furthermore it is interested in improving the working practices and administrative standards employed in hospitals so that cost efficiency is constantly maintained or improved. Finally, the association welcomes and encourages all initiatives that may promote the ethical and cultural dimension of the conduct of the pharmaceutical profession in hospital pharmacies and in the pharmaceutical services of LHUs.

Organisation

Under the terms of the association's statutes, the SIFO has a Scientific committee (SC) and a Board of Governors (BG), with a chairman, a vice-chairman, a secretary, a treasurer and five board members, elected every five years. The actions of the BG are controlled by a Supervisory Board. The members elect regional delegates in each region, who undertake to co-ordinate the local activities in accordance with the guidelines fixed by the BG at the national level.

During an extraordinary national assembly convened on 11th June 2002 in Reggio Calabre, the association adopted a new revised version of its statutes. This was done in order to go through the administrative formalities that were needed for it to obtain the legal status that would enable the association to benefit from certain tax advantages. The main changes

COUNTRY FOCUS - ITALY



introduced to the former statutes of 25th May 1998, concern administrative aspects such as changing the election methods. The Assembly also made some proposals for major changes (allowing pharmacists who do not work in a hospital setting to join and possibly revising the eligibility of the national organs), but the BG decided to postpone their evaluation until the national Congress that will be held in Venice in 2003.

Scientific Activities

The association's scientific activities are grouped around a variety of subjects and themes of general interest to the pharmacy profession within the SSN. The fields in which the association is involved and for which it has set up a local person in charge and a working party include oncology, infectious diseases, pharmacovigilance, emergency pharmaceutical assistance and pharmaceutical support, cardiovascular diseases, geriatrics, radiopharmacy,

pharmacoepidemiology, the development of management and quality systems and clinical and bioethical research. Other particular scientific activities may be added to this list from time to time, and are managed in the same way with a local person in charge and a working party.

In addition to the CS the SIFO has working arrangements with a number of scientific and technical institutions. These include the Study Centre, which is a research partner of the Italian Mario Negri Institute, and which has built up a national and international reputation with other institutions, both governmental and research. The SIFO Pharmacoeconomy Laboratory turns its attention to many areas of current interest and seeks suitable instruments for defining the priorities in the field of health; it is also has an excellent relationship with scientific institutions, the Ministry of Health and the pharmaceutical industry. Finally, the Medical Devices Laboratory devotes itself

to transferring the expertise built up by pharmacists to improving the effectiveness of such devices.

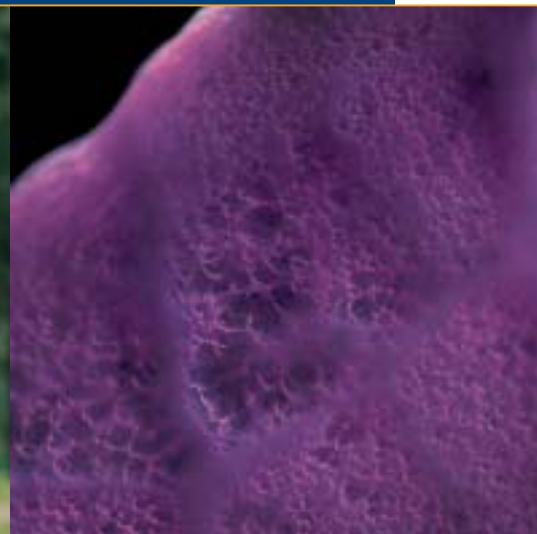
Publications

The SIFO edits and publishes reviews, compilations as well as other documents connected with the activities of the association. The SIFO reviews are the "*Giornale Italiano di Farmacia Clinica*" (Italian Journal of Clinical Pharmacy), which is a quarterly journal dealing with topics relating to epidemiology, research and medico-pharmaceutical information; the SIFO information letter (quarterly publication) publicises the association's activities together with administrative and legal information; and the SIFO Bulletin is a two-monthly source of more detailed information.

For further information visit: www.sifo.it

Samy Bouayad

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