

CHAMPIONING HEALTHCARE
Celebration of MIHMEP 10th Anniversary
Milan, Bocconi University, 9th May 2009

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During the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Master in International Health Management, Economics and Policy, Prof Gaetano M Fara, on behalf of the teachers of Public Health in the Master, delivered the following address

I speak on behalf of a group of epidemiologists, who are professors of public health in three Italian universities (Sapienza University and the Catholic University in Rome, and Parma University in Northern Italy) and who have belonged to the MIHMEP Faculty since its beginning.

These professors were selected by the Italian Society of Public Health with the duty to co-operate with Prof Borgonovi and his colleagues in the planning, organizing and launching the MIHMEP project ten years ago, and to contribute public health as one of the bases on which to build the Master.

These professors contributed to MIHMEP 1 through 10 – and continue to contribute 2 courses in EPIDEMIOLOGY (BASIC and ADVANCED) and 1 course called ISSUES IN PUBLIC HEALTH. They believe that the experience of MIHMEP has been a stimulating contribution to their teaching and research during the last ten years, when many fundamental changes have taken place in Public Health in Italy.

Public Health in the past was mostly based on biological, medical and environmental aspects, and its major tasks were to understand

risk factors of environmental and behavioral origin, to associate them with diseases in the population through epidemiological studies and to find ways to prevent them, or at least, to detect them early and intervene.

More recently, with the need to improve quality, appropriateness and the effectiveness of these interventions, Public Health has been progressively enriched and now includes a growing content of management, science of organization, evaluation of interventions, and attention to the economic aspects of the interventions.

Meanwhile, the role of epidemiology has also been modified; from being descriptive and analytical for etiological purposes (in order to detect a causation relationship between risk factors and diseases) to become a tool to evaluate public health interventions.

The contact, during the last ten years, between the Bocconi University colleagues in the different disciplines cultivated by MIHMEP and other public health scholars has been fruitful: we hope for the former, but we are certain for the latter.

We finally feel that a good epidemiological basis for MIHMEP students – most of them do not come with biomedical training – is necessary to understand better the problems of health and disease in populations and to take care of them. In addition, we feel that the use of epidemiology as a tool to cope with the most important problems of Public Health worldwide (with special attention to developing countries), and the relationship between selected major risk factors and the individual and community health is critical. An appreciation of how risk factors interact with the social, cultural and economic development of a country and the extent to which interventions could reduce the effect of these factors will represent a

good basis for those who, in the future, will be active in the field of international health management, economics and policy.

I close my contribution saying that my Colleagues and I deeply appreciate the unique privilege we have experienced and will continue to experience, in our participation in the adventure of MIHMEP, and - above all - our contacts with so many lively, enthusiastic and positive young women and men from all over the world.

Gaetano M Fara, on behalf of

Daniela D'Alessandro

John Frederick Osborn

Gualtiero Ricciardi

Carlo Signorelli

Paolo Villari