Acta Biomed 2021; Vol. 92, N. 4: e2021410 DOI: 10.23750/abm.v92i4.11927

Foreword - Advances in Hemoglobinopathies: A new section of Acta Biomedica

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More than 270 million people worldwide are carriers of a clinically relevant hemoglobinopathy. One percent of pregnancies are at risk for disease, resulting in 330,000 affected newborns every year worldwide, 83% with sickle cell disease and 17% with thalassemias. The burden of these hemoglobin disorders is expected to increase in the coming decades because of the reductions in infant mortality in many low-income countries and the increasing migration from high to low frequency areas.

The management of patients with hemoglobinopathies is complex, requiring a multidisciplinary approach. Nevertheless, physicians in many disciplines may care for these patients and should be familiar with their potential acute and chronic complications. Having a good understanding of the mechanisms and management may improve the patients' quality of life and reduce premature mortality of sufferers.

Starting from 2021, Acta Biomedica Parmensis will dedicate an annual update to the "***Advances in Hemoglobinopathies***". The section editor of this new editorial initiative is prof. Ashraf T Soliman, Pediatrician and Endocrinologist at Hamad Medical Center (HMC) of Doha.

Prof Soliman is a pionier in the study of growth and endocrine complications in hemoglobinopathies. He collaborates strictly with prof. Mohamed Yassin, Hematologist-Oncologist at HMC and is Director of higher education school of the International Network of Clinicians for Endocrinopathies in Thalassemia and Adolescence Medicine (ICET-A).

ICET-A is a Network of clinicians from the following countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Italy, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Turkey, United Kingdom and USA.

I am sincerely grateful to Prof. Maurizio Vanelli, Editor in Chief of Acta Biomedica for having accepted my proposal for the implementation of this new section and to Prof. Ashraf T Soliman for his enthusiasm and dynamism in the coordination and collection of "***Advances in Hemoglobinopathies***" papers. Thanks also to dr. Valeria Ceci, Editorial Office Manager of Acta Biomedica, for the continuous collaboration, invaluable help and great support.

The present issue of Acta Biomedica contains three articles on: "*The different patterns of insulin response during Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT) in transfused young patients with β-Thalassemia; Immigration and screening programs for hemoglobinopathies in Italy, Spain and Turkey and The effects of treatment with blood transfusion, iron chelation and hydroxyurea on puberty, growth and spermatogenesis in sickle cell disease*", all of which I hope should be of interest to you.