

Reflecting on Success and Looking Towards the Future

Five years ago, *La Medicina del Lavoro* was primarily written in Italian, and the authorship was almost restricted to a few Italian groups. Our journal was available only in part in digital format, and it was accessible only by subscription. Since then, we have made significant strides. The entire collection is now available online and has open access since its foundation in 1901. From 2020 onward, all papers are written in English to reach a broader readership. This evolution is a testament to our progress and a reason to be proud. My heartfelt gratitude goes to all those who implemented new editorial lines: from Authors who have provided original and engaging material to Reviewers and Advisory Board Members who have diligently improved the manuscripts, from the Deputy Editor-in-Chief and Associate Editors to the Editorial Assistants who offered wise advice, diligent reminders, and careful technical editing. Their unique contributions have shaped the journal's trajectory, leading to a broader audience and authorship – thereby enhancing the competition for publication and, hence, the overall journal's quality. Such collective efforts, blending newcomers' willingness to contribute and editors' openness to new contributors, are deeply appreciated and integral to the journal's success. We also gratefully acknowledge the Italian Society of Occupational Medicine's sponsorship of its official journal, which allows us to rely on scientific merit as the sole criterion to decide whether to accept or decline submissions.

Today, as we face the challenges posed by Industry 4.0 and the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence, we are witnessing increased inequalities and deteriorating working conditions. Such conditions undermine workers' ability to secure a healthy and dignified life for themselves and their families. Furthermore, even advancements in the green economy may become problematic if sustainability efforts overlook their implications for the workforce.

European workers who will become unemployed are rejecting an accelerated transition toward a green economy, which is now critically perceived as a new form of fundamentalism even by the population's segments most sensitive to the problems of environmental pollution and the anthropogenic contribution to climate change. The crisis that the automotive sector is going through in Europe results from an abrupt and radical choice for electric engines and the unilateral phasing out of the endothermic ones, which will continue to operate on the rest (i.e., most) of the planet. It is time to reflect on how such a radical choice may not only be inadequate to face environmental challenges. Past experiences teach us that adopting a single strategy to address an old problem risks merely substituting a known, solvable problem with a still unknown solution that may introduce new problems even more challenging to resolve. It has been like that since lead was phased out as a fuel anti-detonant and substituted by benzene and when diesel engines were preferred over gasoline engines, making them economically advantageous. It may happen the same now, banning fossil fuels in favor of electrical engines. Apparent solutions to environmental issues might soon result in a profound political crisis for fragile Western democracies and, in the long run, can result in new, till now conspicuously underestimated, ecological disasters.

Urgent and impactful actions must also be implemented to eliminate forced labor, eradicate modern slavery, and put an end to human trafficking. Ensuring safe and protected work environments for all employees, including migrants, especially female migrants and "invisible" workers in unstable employment situations, should become a priority for our governments, envisioning a role for occupational health to serve workers facing climate change and challenging environmental circumstances.

We cannot forget our roots and will continue pursuing the goal of ensuring the integrity and quality of

Occupational Medicine research while disseminating its scientific results. Our commitment to occupational health is unwavering, even in the face of new epidemics and winds of war that threaten a continent that has lived in peace and prosperity for three-quarters of a century. This commitment is a testament to our determination to overcome the challenges that sometimes unexpectedly arise, and it should reassure all of us about the journal's mission.

Occupational health physicians practicing to serve on the front lines directly impact the health and safety of workers in various work environments. Their insights, experience, and dedication are invaluable in shaping evidence-based practices and policies that promote a healthier and safer workplace. However, the key to our success lies in collaboration. By bridging the gap between academia and the actual challenges in working settings, we can recognize the importance of cooperation between academia and practice. Establishing channels for dialogue, sharing best practices, and integrating academic research with real-world applications will enhance the impact of our collective efforts, driving positive change in occupational health. By fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing among educational institutions and practitioners, we can address emerging issues and nurture the next generation of occupational health professionals. Let's be inspired to work together for a healthier and safer workplace.

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