



## OPINION PIECE

Giampaolo Perna, Director of the Department of Clinical Neuroscience in Villa San Benedetto, Italy

### **"The Italian Province is regarded as a leader in the scientific landscape of the transalpine country"**

Professor Giampaolo Perna reports that the Italian Province, led by the Casa di Cura Villa San Benedetto Menni hospital complex and under its scientific direction, secured €313,870 in funding from the CARIPLO Foundation to develop a research project on the factors associated with the development of dementia, expected to last four years.



Prof. Giampaolo Perna

The project, entitled *"Are Anxiety Disorders associated with accelerated cognitive decline and molecular mechanisms of dementia? A multi-centric Italian study in middle-aged and older patients and controls"* will be undertaken in collaboration with

the Hospital Universitario Senese - Policlinico Santa Maria alle Scotte, the Association La Nostra Famiglia - Istituto di Ricovero e Cura a Carattere Scientifico (IRCCS) Eugenio Medea, the Istituto di Neuroscienze UOS de Cagliari, the National Research Council and the participation of another of the Institution's centres, Villa San Giuseppe.

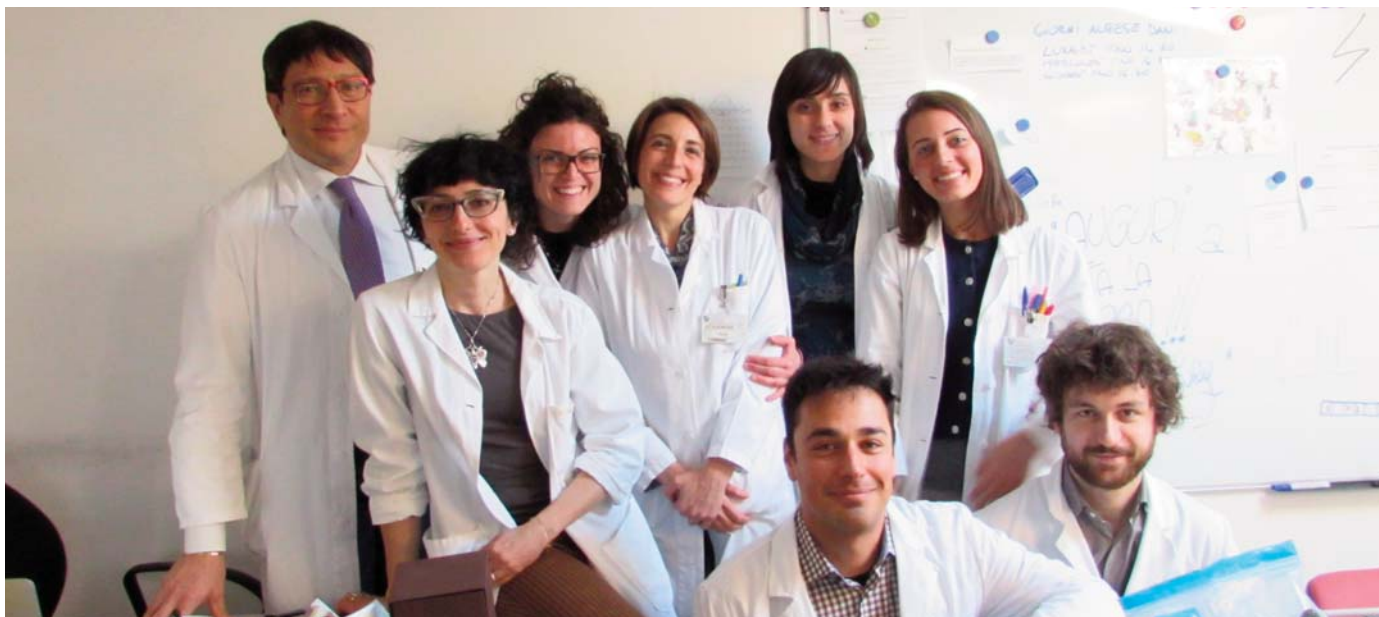
#### **Origin of the initiative**

For many years, we have studied the relationship between anxiety and brain functioning, as it is clear that anxiety interferes with cognitive functions. On the occasion of a congress of the Italian Psychopathology Society

(Società Italiana di Psicopatologia) in 2014, we prepared a report on anxiety disorders in the elderly, and when drafting this report the idea arose that led us to propose the project.

#### **Cariplo Foundation**

The Cariplo Foundation is the historical continuation of the Cassa di Risparmio of the Provinces of Lombardy, created in Milan on 12 June 1823. From the start, the Cassa di Risparmio has served the local economy and sustained the social and cultural growth of the Lombardy community, following the principles of self-organisation and subsidiarity in its own operation. The Cariplo Foundation makes its own



Research team at Villa San Benedetto Menni

financial and project resources available to help non-profit organisations to perform initiatives of collective interest.

Thus the Foundation operates on the basis of the subsidiarity principle, which establishes that organisations should not be replaced in but rather strengthen the civil society organisations that they operate for the public good.

### **Impact for the Province**

This aid for Lombardy is a very significant result, given that our project was selected from 101 excellent projects, despite not being presented by a university organisation or official research institute. Moreover, our project was the only psychiatric project that has been accepted.

Thus, Lombardy is regarded as excellent within Italian science. It should be pointed out that the project involves 2 of the 3 of Italian care complex, thus making the project truly provincial, not associated with a single centre. The fact that the province has obtained this funding will make it easier to win other competitions in the future.

### **Collaboration Network**

Obviously, I had already been familiar with the institutions and collaborated with them for a long time through my personal relationships, but this is

the first official collaboration in an important project.

The project has been conceived and designed by us, who play a guiding role and are ultimately responsible for its success.

### **Project**

The initial situation for the research involves a number of factors associated with the development of dementia which are not yet clear. The main goal is thus to identify them clearly, in order to detect individuals at risk on whom to focus prevention efforts. In this first stage, we are assessing the hypothesis that Anxiety Disorders (ADs) might be among these factors, given their strong presence in aged persons.

The general goal is to examine the association between ADs, cognitive impairment, and some molecular mechanisms involved in dementia. This will take place through the joint efforts of Research Centres known for their competence in clinical research of ADs, neuropsychology, molecular analysis and Brain Imaging techniques. In conclusion, our goal is to perform this study in a rigorous manner to prove our value to science, which in turn will enable us to access further European funding and develop prevention and wellbeing programmes for ageing populations.



# INSTITUTIONAL

## Reflecting on hospitaller life

In April, at the age of 17, I came to Ciempozuelos to begin my postulancy. I came with that well-known message of Jesus in my mind: "Freely you have received; freely give" (Mt. 10). Simply I came to give, to pass on everything that I had discovered in my life that was received from the Lord. That idea, which I intended to carry out at all costs, was quite difficult for me. Difficult were the years leading up to my life's profession and even beyond.

### Between Light and Shadow

It was something like a blind search, between light and shadow, a crisis of faith, and generosity dotted all of my steps both forward and back. Maybe I meant to travel the path by my own strength. Meanwhile, community life, or better, sisterly life, was growing stronger in me through small lights that grew ever more present: "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Ps. 132); "Has no one condemned you? Neither do I condemn you..." (Jn. 8) "... first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Mt. 7); "Give things to the majority" (M.F.).

And to this same path was added Hospitality, answering the ideal of my arrival in Ciempozuelos: "Freely you have

received, freely give," and "Whatever you have for one of the least of these my brethren, you did for me" (Mt. 25). These were again the small lights driving my path alongside the people who needed me then and in the future: children, the elderly, sick people...

### The Lord was opening the eyes of my heart

Today, as I reflect back on my many years of hospitaller life, I see how the Lord has been gradually changing the outlook of my path, step by step.

In my daily searching, progressing and regressing, the Lord was opening the eyes of my heart. He was coming to meet me. I remember how I came to discover a new presence in my life, a person, a path beside mine; a way of sailing together with the one steering my ship... and I began to understand the meaning of the words so often heard and repeated, "My Jesus, I trust not in me, I trust in you and I surrender" (P.F.).

And also: "We are useless servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17) "For God is working in you ..." (Phil. 2) "Cast your burden upon the Lord..." (1 Pe. 5). Indeed, it was as if I began to walk the same path in a new way; as if my life took a different direction.

I went with Him, in His name... And I began to understand that

**"I went with Him and I began to understand that others also came to me in His name"**

others also came to me in His name; and when I forgave somebody, I had already been forgiven "... up to 70 times 7" (Mt. 18), and not only by Him but also by my sisters; when I prayed, I put everything in His hands, "... For we do not know what to pray for as we ought" (Rom. 8); and when I lavished gestures of tenderness, listening or companionship, I had already received "a hundred times as much" (Mt. 19).

### "... I fear no evil for you are with me..."

Otherwise, life goes on with the same falls, the same rises, the same way of being; the same going away and coming back again... "But I fear no evil for you are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Ps. 23)

Therefore, what to say? But THANK YOU.

**Sister Hospitaller**

## “Our goal is to help and defend the interests of people, by preference those with intellectual disabilities and mental illness”

Sonia Martín Macho



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Sonia Martín Macho, coordinator of the **María Josefa Recio Foundation**, explains the main characteristics and areas of the work they do.

### When and under what premises was the Foundation created?

The María Josefa Recio Foundation (FMJR) was founded by María Dolores Aldaba Aranguren, Superior General, on 29 May 1981 in Spain, as a Private Cultural Foundation, under the Protectorate of the Ministry of Education and Science. Its purpose was to grant scholarships and aid for social and health assistance to users at Sisters Hospitaliers centres, as well as to carry out and promote higher education and scientific and technical research in the field of psychiatry and intellectual disability.

Since its creation, the Foundation has taken on other tasks such as property management and guardianship for patients assisted at the Centres in the Canonical Province of Palencia.

### What are its goals?

We are a non-profit Foundation, and our goal is to help and defend the interests of people, by preference those with intellectual disabilities and mental illness.

Our main concern is to contribute to improving the integration and rehabilitation of these groups, by protecting the interests of disabled persons and developing research and educational projects. This project forms part of the hospitalier values, expanding the work of assisting patients to those not necessarily located in the Centres of the Congregation.

### What activities are you working on?

Our activities are conducted in two areas, one is the assistance we provide by managing the property of patients, guardianship and scholarships and grants, and the other is Scientific.

### Patient property management

Since 2004 we have managed the cash deposits made to the

centre/foundation by the assisted person or his or her legal representative for the purpose of fulfilling any obligations they might incur with regard to the centre, in any of the following areas: leisure and social activities, cafeteria, clothing and footwear, personal hygiene products...

Today, the centres taking part in this activity are the Complejo Hospitalario San Luis of Palencia, the Aita Menni de Mondragón Hospital and Centro Hospitalario Padre Menni of Santander.

### Guardianship

As a guardian entity, the Foundation defends the rights and takes responsibility for the obligations of the incapacitated person, acting with the diligence of a good father in three areas of intervention: legal, personal social/health and financial. This activity has been in place since 2008; currently the number of protected under guardianship is 150.

### Scholarships and grants

From the beginning, these have been given to both individuals and legal entities (schools, institutions and public or private institutions) for the development of research projects.



### Research and studies

Under the umbrella of the Foundation, in 1995 the Instituto de Investigaciones Psiquiátricas (Psychiatric Research Institute or IIP) was created with the aim of establishing provincial lines of research, and supporting, developing and promoting the research done at the Centres in order to raise their scientific and research level.

### Is your range of action limited to the Canonical Province of Palencia or is it broader?

Although the Foundation's scope of action is national, for now, our activity takes place mainly within the Canonical Province of Palencia, with some collaboration in other provinces.

### What are your plans to continue carrying out your activities in the future?

Over the course of 2015, we will assess the activity of managing property for persons with disabilities is implemented in the scope of influence of other Sisters Hospitaller centres; in addition, we will continue and improve the management processes in place, raise the quality and quantity of care we give our wards and further expand the research projects carried out by the Psychiatric Research Institute.

### Foundation Structure

- Council, established by the Provincial Government of Palencia
- Legal Adviser
- Coordinator
- Secretarial and Administration Department
- Social Work Department
- Director of IIP
- Research Technician of IIP
- Centre Collaborators

## V Hospitaller Pastoral Health Care Days



V Hospitaller Pastoral Health Care Days

### House of Health in Idanha

The Fifth Pastoral Health Seminar was held on December 27 at the auditorium of the "Casa de Saúde in Idanha", Portugal, with "The Christian Sense of Suffering" as its central topic.

This day for a deeper analysis of the topic in question was designed for the various participants in the Hospitaller mission, from technical staff to users, including the relatives of the latter, volunteers and those who in one way or another are sensitive to the matter of suffering and seek healthy and saving ways to experience and live it.

During the first part of the day we highlighted communications, with a marked theological content that helped us to reflect on the place of suffering in human life, and its meaningless when disconnected from Life as a whole, and the value that the narrative of Life on this path of awareness and understanding regarding the meaning that suffering can have. As a theological place for encounter with God, for communion with Him, suffering can be more than just a sterile experience of finiteness, and instead an opening towards the infinite in which those who suffer do not feel overwhelmed by God, but accompanied by Him.

In turn, the second part of the day was enriched with the practical way in which the various participants in the Hospitaller Mission confront and live with suffering on the basis of their life and professional experiences. And in particular, the suffering of those who are the prime recipients of the task of the mission.

## Gold Medal for Civic Merit from the City of Barcelona



Teresa Iñiguez and Xavier Trias



Teresa Iñiguez with the Superiors and Managers

The Congregation of the Sisters Hospitallers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has been awarded the Gold Medal of Civic Merit given by the City of Barcelona for its contribution, across its history, to improving the citizens' quality of life and health through its health care and social healthcare centres.

The award ceremony, attended by about 250 people, took place on 16 February at a town hall in Catalonia. Among its momentous attendees were the Mayor of Barcelona, Xavier Trias, Archbishop of Barcelona, Lluís Martínez Sistach, Bishop of Sant Feliu, Msgr. Agustí Cortés Soriano and the Minister of Health of the Generalitat of Catalonia, Boi Ruiz. Joining them on behalf of the institution, were the Provincial Superior, and the Superiors and Managers from the Institution's centres in Catalonia.

Teresa Iñiguez, Superior of the Canonical Province

of Barcelona, had the honour of accepting the award from the Mayor, and expressed her gratitude for what she called, "A tribute not only to all the Sisters who for over one hundred and thirty years have given the better of themselves for the health and welfare of the sick citizens of Catalonia, but also to the collaborators and workers, both present and past, who personally and professionally formed an integral part of this institution".

Also during the ceremony, Teresa López, Vicar of the Canonical Province of Barcelona, made a statement centred on the founding figure of the institution, Saint Benedict Menni, a man of inexhaustible charity and noble sentiments. Sister Teresa was grateful that the presentation ceremony coincided with the centenary celebration of the death of Father Menni.





## Recognition of the health and safety management system

"Villa San Giuseppe" Health Centre

The "Casa di Cura Villa San Giuseppe", Italy, health centre has obtained the OHSAS 18001 certificate, which recognises that our structure has an Occupational Health and Safety Management System that complies with the OHSAS 18001:2007 standards.

It is our goal for our structure to obtain the OHSAS 18001 certificate, complying with the OHSAS 18001 international standard and performing a project for the improvement of our services over time, displaying our effort and respect for its workers.



## Caring for the ill and homeless in Douala



Volunteering at the Saint Benedict Menni Mental Healthcare Centre

Saint Benoît Menni Health Centre

My name is Sadeu Vincent de Paul. I have been a nurse since September 2013. Ever since I was a boy I always wanted to help those around me... My training has given me the opportunity to provide emergency assistance to people who have suffered accidents, on the streets and in the neighbourhoods. I thought this help I was bringing to my "neighbours" was largely sufficient. But since I became part of the medical team of Saint Benoît Menni Health Centre in Douala, I have come to understand that it was far from sufficient. After joining this team, I participated in my very first outing in the streets, which gave me an altogether different image of life.

On that day, we encountered around 45 ill people, and we fed, washed and clothed them. I felt an intense emotion at the sight of these sick people who need our support and our care. This experience helped me understand that each ill person is their own individual whom we must listen to and help.

At the end of the day, I returned home, thanking the Lord and Les Frères et Sœurs de Saint Benoît Menni for giving me the opportunity to put my know-how and energy to good use in service of people who are suffering. You can also devote your free time to God and to those in need, as it is by helping those around you and praising the Lord that you truly make yourself useful in society.



## ACAMÁN Leisure Club



Activities of the ACAMAN Leisure Club



### ACAMÁN Complex

The ACAMAN Complex in Tenerife, Spain, has created a Leisure Club as a recreational alternative during after-school hours.

This initiative is to provide users of the complex a varied set of activities, encompassing sporting, recreational, and educational facets... in addition to celebrations and special events, and a chance to enjoy free time in a healthy and productive manner.

It offers specifically targeted therapies such as speech therapy, physiotherapy and basal stimulation using a multisensory room.

Utilising the full extent of facilities at the complex, there are a range of fields, interactive whiteboards,

computers, psychomotor and relaxation materials... allowing us to make each day a different adventure for kids. There is no boredom here!

The Leisure Club is staffed by professionals of the Centre, which adds a plus of quality and trust for the families. The 15 kids in the club at present are supervised by five of our collaborators, in addition to other professionals as needed periodically (speech therapist, physiotherapist...).

While the club is still in its early stages, there are many proposals seeking to continue and expand. Together we will share good times, and enjoyment and entertainment will go hand in hand.

## Award for Professional Excellence 2014

### Sagrat Cor

The coordinator of the Psychogeriatric Unit of Hospital "Sagrat Cor de Martorell" (Spain), Dr. Manel Sánchez Pérez, has been one of the professionals to receive the Award for Professional Excellence 2014 from the Barcelona Medical Association.

This award, as determined by a jury consisting of renowned doctors, recognises distinguished professional careers based on honesty, commitment, altruism, integrity, good work and excellence.





## Hospitality without borders...



"Yendube" Children's Hospital



"Yendube" Children's Hospital

In 1962, four Augustinian Hospitaller Sisters from Cambrai and one laywoman were sent on a mission to Dapaong in Togo to provide care for the sick children in the region. On 8 December 1962, the "YENDUBE" children's hospital opened its doors. The sisters provide care, educate the mothers, vaccinate and surround themselves with lay staff whom they teach about care, diseases, etc. Other sisters and laypeople quickly came to join the small community.

"Yendube", the name given to the hospital by the mothers themselves, means "God is there" in the local language. It has several sectors of activity:

- The admissions ward with 80 beds for children from 0 to 10 years with intensive care, neonatology, medicine and nutrition.
- The Free Clinic for outpatient care which receives 100-200 children per day.
- The Nutritional Recovery Centre with an admissions ward of 12 beds for serious cases of malnutrition.
- A Mother and Child Protection Centre that guarantees care for mothers and children in several villages.
- A laboratory and blood bank.
- A pharmacy.
- Manufacture of bleach.
- Spirulina production (algae rich in proteins).

The work is carried out at the hospital in collaboration with the local staff – around sixty workers – and four sisters (Director, Nursing Auxiliary, Nurse and Pharmacist).

Since 1998, the Yendube Children's Hospital Association was created to aid management and development. Within the children's hospital, the Living in Hope Association has been ensuring the accompaniment, follow-up and care for AIDS patients – both adults and children.

# Centenary Celebration

This year, the centenary of our Founder's death, presents a chance to revisit the life and spirituality of Saint Benedict Menni, a time of thanks and renewal for all who form the hospitaller family he founded.

We are hosting some very gracious and enriching events and experiences at the Institutional level and in conjunction with the Brothers of San Juan de Dios. To round off this unforgettable year, from 22 to the 24 April in Ciempozuelos, we will celebrate the Centenary with a few days of gathering and reflection on the figure of our founder, with a centrepiece Mass to be held on 24 April at 12:00 noon.

**Together we will walk with Saint Benedict Menni and let his spirit be the one that guides us to be prophets of hospitality in our world.**

1914 - 2014  
**SAINT  
BENEDICT  
MENNI**  
CENTENARY  
OF HIS DEATH



## Key Dates: March, April and May 2015

- Canonical Visit by Anabela Carneiro, Superior General, to the Province of Palencia.
- Institutional Research Conference, organised by FIDMAG at Hospital San Rafael on 13 March.
- Holy Week, from 29 March to 6 April.
- International scientific conference: "Social cognition, a multidimensional approach," organised by the Menni Brain Damage Network on 17 April in Bilbao, Spain.
- Centenary Celebration of the death of Saint Benedict Menni, from 22 to 24 April in Ciempozuelos, Spain.
- XXIII Plenary Council, from 25 April to 1 May in Ciempozuelos, Spain.

For more information and contact  
[comunicacion@hospitalarias.org](mailto:comunicacion@hospitalarias.org)  
[www.hospitalarias.org](http://www.hospitalarias.org)