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ASOCIAȚIA EUROPEANĂ A MEDICILOR DIN SPITALE**

Document :	AEMH 20-024
Title:	National Report Italy
Author :	FNOMCeO
Purpose :	Information
Distribution :	AEMH Member Delegations
Date :	23 October 2020

ITALY COUNTRY REPORT 2020 FOCUS ON COVID-19

Italy was the first European and the second worldwide country to be hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

After the two cases of imports from China detected on January 30, 2020, the first internal outbreak of COVID-19, Italian and European, was detected on February 21, 2020, starting from 16 confirmed cases in Lombardy, in Codogno, in the Province of Lodi.

The rapid increase in cases and the high percentage of mortality, also in relation to the reduced screening capacity in the first phase of the epidemic, with the inpatient and intensive care beds of the hospital network rapidly running out, have led the Italian government to rapidly issue a series of implementing decrees in which the restriction measures became progressively more strict and extended to the entire national territory, up to the protracted lock down phase of almost 3 months (from 9 March to 3 May 2020).

The descent of the epidemiological curve led to a progressive relaxation of the restrictive measures until August 2020, when, following the rise in the contagion curve and in anticipation of a second wave of the virus, subsequent restrictive decrees were issued.

As of October 21, 2020, about 14 million swabs for the virus have been carried out in Italy (13.962.029), [3] almost 500.000 positive cases (449.648) and more than 36.000 deaths (36.832) have been recorded.

The currently positive are 155,442, of which 9,057 hospitalized with symptoms and 926 in intensive care (data as of 21 October 2020).

In this second phase, compared to the first wave of COVID-19, we can count today in Italy on a greater screening capacity (177,848 swabs performed on 20 October 2020, compared to the daily average of 5,000 swabs in March 2020) and on the improvement of taking charge of patients, thanks to the expansion of knowledge about the virus, as well as on a greater availability of safety devices and on the increase, albeit still inadequate and partial, of hospitalization and intensive care places.

The Covid-19 epidemic is and remains a mainly health problem, determined by a progressive weakening of the health system, which in recent decades has seen a significant cut in health personnel and in hospitalization and intensive care places, which is not capable of withstanding the shockwave of a pandemic.

Medical staff, on the front line against the Covid-19 epidemic, have been hit hard. To date, 181 doctors have fallen during the pandemic. Their names are listed in the memorial list published on the portal of FNOMCeO, the National Federation of the Orders of Physicians and Dentists, which in February 2020 had already created and launched the first CME course on COVID-19, promoted by Dr. Roberto Stella, member of the FNOMCeO Central Committee and unfortunately the first doctor in Italy who died due to Covid-19. The FNOMCeO actively collaborates with the Civil Protection, through the network of provincial orders, for the distribution of safety devices to health personnel.