

In memory of Professor Federigo Sicuteri

In April 2003, Prof. Federigo Sicuteri passed away suddenly. Born in April 1920, Sicuteri has been honoured in Italy as well as throughout the world. In 1976, he became the first President of the Italian Society for the Study of Headache and, subsequently, the first Italian to become President of the International Headache Society. Sicuteri's philosophy continues after his death with his beloved wife and co-researcher Maria Nicolodi Sicuteri.

My personal relationship with Federigo Sicuteri began in Norway at an international congress, where I found him reading my poster on the spectral analysis of EEG, which he liked very much. Since then a relationship between an influential teacher and a young researcher, which lasted until his death, was established. Besides honouring me by his presence at congresses that I organised, he always pushed me to work on certain topics, for example the psychopathological aspects of primary headaches, which led to the constitution of the "Italian Group for the Study of the Psychopathological Aspects of Headaches". Sicuteri actively participated in this Group with his team, composed of Nicolodi Sicuteri, Marabini and Canova.

I asked Maria Nicolodi Sicuteri to outline some of her husband's more innovative achievements; she responded by indicating that Sicuteri:

- Introduced the serotonin theory for migraine, a theoretical and research platform that has constituted the underlying theme for migraine treatment starting with lysergic acid derivatives to the more recent triptans.
- Introduced the central theory of migraine, which is accepted today.
- Introduced the first antimigraine prophylactic drug, methysergide maleate.

- Identified the role of central pain, recognized by the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) and subsequently called primary fibromyalgia.
- Introduced the association of antimigraine drugs, a concept which is still unbeaten in efficacy and also supported by recent data.
- Emphasised that in migraineurs there may be a genetic instability in excitatory amino acid pathways that is passed onto first-degree relatives.
- Founded the first headache centre in Europe and was one of the founders of the International Headache Society.

Nicolodi Sicuteri commented that, while working together for 15 years, she and her husband accomplished many other things that she hopes to be able to continue. She stressed this point only because it was of particular interest to him.

Others have offered comments about Sicuteri: Donald D. Price wrote: "*Sicuteri has changed the life of million of sufferers*"; K. Michael Welch said: "*He taught us what research means*"; J. Edmeads stated: "*Sicuteri is to headaches as the Ferrari is to automobiles*".

Sicuteri himself wrote: "*I do not want rituals, nor words.*"

Simone Marabini said: "*We worked with him and we had some good laughs. When I think of him, I'm not inspired to speak of him but stimulated to do something.*"

"*I agree*", said Maria Nicolodi Sicuteri.

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