

Report on the 2023 EASOM Summer School Catania (Sicily, Italy)

*Gender differences and risks in work environments:
Scientific communities compare their experience.*

Challenges on Teaching and Training OM Specialists and others.

By Prof.V.Rapisarda

The European Summer School works of the Schools of Occupational Medicine in Europe (EASOM) held in Catania from August 31st till September 2nd, dealing with *Gender differences and risks in work environments: scientific communities compare their experience*, have recently ended, a really interesting issue both from a social and scientific standpoint.

Works were chaired by the EASOM President, Professor Begoña Martínez-Jarreta, aided by the local board run by Professor Venerando Rapisarda and took place in the enchanting setting of the 18th century University Botanic Garden in Catania (Sicily).

This event, sponsored by Catania's Town hall and by the Clinical and Experimental Medicine Departments as well as BIOMETEC from Catania University, revealed itself as an opportunity for fruitful debate among experts coming from different European countries and several Italian Universities.

During the proceedings, participants discussed problems related to gender differences in the work world, and they further pointed out the importance

of taking these differences into due account while assessing risks as well as the need to differently evaluate impacts and risks of work activities for men and women.

Several other risks were treated, which impact the work world, such as chemical, physical, biological and carcinogenic ones. Moreover, the importance of health dissemination and promotion in work places was highlighted and the ever increasing gender-violence-related criticalities were also pointed out by a multi-disciplinary debate among doctors and experts of various branches, psychologists, biologists and so on.

The first day of the EASOM Summer School 2023 was dedicated to the importance of gender differences in the assessment of risks in work milieus, with the interventions of EASOM General Secretary Nicole Majery, from Luxembourg, Prof. Peter Bulat (Vice President of EASOM), from Beograd, Serbia and Prof. Begoña Martínez-Jarreta (Saragoza, Spain).

Among other interventions in the two following days, we highlight that of Prof. Marcello Campagna, on biomechanical risks and gender differences in work environments. The importance of Occupational Medicine Training was underscored in Prof. Ermanno Vitale's presentation (Enna, Italy). Besides, Prof. Caterina Ledda's slide presentation dealt with gender differences and the importance of dissemination to the new generations (Catania, Italy).

Professor Nicola Mucci, from the Specialization School in Florence (Italy), emphasized the crucial role of nutrition within Occupational Medicine.

Professor Massimo Bracci, from Marche's University, talked about differences and risk assessment in specific work activities, especially as far as contraindications of night-shift work are concerned.

The need to comply with all diversities was remarked by Professor Concettina Fenga and Professor Nicola Magnavita from Messina and Rome (Italy), respectively.

Several other professionals attended EASOM Summer School 2023, as proof of its highly multi-disciplinary characterization, among them Prof. Maria Angela Sortino, chairman of Catania's BIOMETEC Department, Prof. Pietro Castellino, President of Catania University Medicine School, Eng. Antonio Leonardi, Prevention Department Director of Catania Provincial Health System, who spoke about the promotion of health prevention in work environments, and Dr. Gaetano Sirna, University Hospital "G. Rodolico-San Marco" General Director, who focused his speech on the impact of Occupational Medicine for the safety and well being in work environments.

From debates, the pressing need arose for greater law uniformity in the various EU Countries in the issues at play, with the intent of filling the still remarkable discrepancies existing in workers' protection practices, particularly considering gender differences: in the European Union there are still too many such discrepancies.

The Congress works ended with all participants being satisfied for living three days of intense activity, accompanied by the Sicilian cuisine tradition and immersed in Catania's dark baroque, within a unique scenario between the Ionian sea and Mount Etna.

All participants surely wish to meet again in 2024 at the Summer School in Amsterdam.