



available at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)



journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/jbmt](http://www.elsevier.com/jbmt)



## EDITORIAL

# Italian osteopathy – An exciting European example

Osteopathy in Europe – particularly in Italy—is evolving its own professional shape – independent of the long-established United Kingdom model (which is itself changing), and different from osteopathy's roots in the USA.

In the UK, since the initiation of state regulation, and the establishment of the profession's regulating body, the *General Osteopathic Council*, there appears to have been an emerging trend towards a more biomechanical/musculoskeletal, evidence-based, focus for the profession. Obvious conditions such as low back pain, and neck and shoulder issues (as examples), seem to be what UK's close to 4000 osteopaths treat, most of the time, encouraged by the GOC, and the BOA (British Osteopathic Association) the profession's virtual 'trade-union'.

While those UK trained osteopaths who have had, as part of their training, a broader philosophical and practical exposure – for example where naturopathic subjects are part of the training, or where 'classical osteopathy' has been taught – still treat patients with general health conditions, this is not the direction either the GOC, BOA, or the colleges, are encouraging.

In the USA the majority of DO's no longer employ manipulation as part of their patient care; their work being almost indistinguishable from standard medical practice. Those DO's who do use manual approaches in patient care are finding an ever more hostile environment in which, in many States, payment for time spent on such treatment is being denied, or drastically reduced, by health insurance providers.

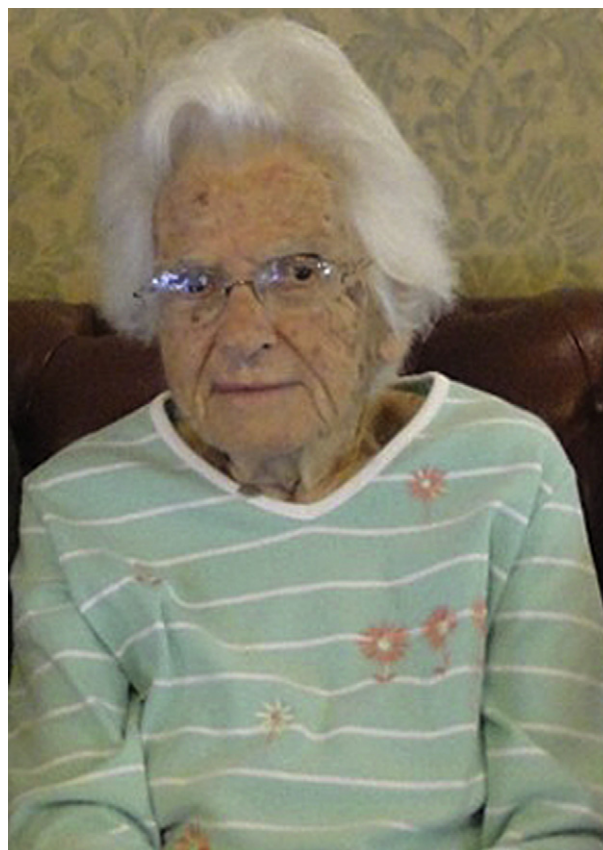
Participation in the *2nd Italian Congress of Osteopathic Medicine*, in Rome, in June (June 17–20), demonstrated that an energetic and exciting osteopathic profession is alive and thriving in Italy (as it is in many other European countries – including Spain, France, Belgium, Austria, Germany and Russia).

The conference, efficiently organised under the direction of Paulo Tozzi DO, brought together many young (mainly) Italian osteopaths, who appear to have found ways of initiating and/or collaborating in a range of research projects, details of which were presented to an enthusiastic conference audience of around 200.

Two veteran American osteopaths were also presenting, Professor Michael Patterson – who in his address confirmed many of the trends discussed above – as well as Viola

Frymann DO, who continues her teaching and clinical work as she approaches 90. Dr Frymann spoke about her work with infants and neonates, some of it collaboratively with Italian osteopaths.

Some of the projects reported on by Italian osteopaths (see selection of summaries below), involved only small number of patients – making it impossible to draw definitive conclusions – however what seems at least as important as the results of such studies (and arguably far more important), is the fact that they are taking place at all.



Dr Viola Frymann, Rome, June 2010