



Minutes of the first meeting of the European Narrative Medicine Society

May 15, 2020

Participants:

- *Paola Chesi, Fondazione ISTUD, Italy*
- *Cinzia Colucci, Man power, Italy*
- *Christian De Lorenzo, Université Paris- Est, Creteil*
- *John Launer, Tavistock Center, London, UK*
- *Jonathan Mc Farland, Sechenov University, Moscow, Russia*
- *Angelika Messner, University of Kiel, Germany,*
- *Maria Giulia Marini, Fondazione ISTUD, Italy*
- *Stefania Polvani, SIMEN, President*
- *Mauro Zampolini, President of Medical Phisiatrie de l'Union Europeenne de medicine specialiste*

Special guests:

- *Carol Ann Farkas, MCPHS, Boston*
- *Steven Legari, Museum des beaux Art, Montreal Canada*

Could not participate:

- *John Launer, Tavistock Center, London, UK*
- *Susana Magalhaes, University of Porto, Portugal*
- *Neil Vickers, King's College, London, UK*

The scope of the European Narrative Medicine Society

The European Narrative Medicine Society was born from an idea of the Italian Society of Narrative Medicine, and it is an association of non-profit researchers dedicated to the investigation of Medical Humanities and Humanities for Health in the medical, health care, social services to respond to a model of health based on four pillars: biological, psychological, social and spiritual (where spiritual stands also for existential). The disciplines encompassed by the society are therefore Humanities for Health, Narrative Medicine and possible other languages of care as for instance art therapy. The purpose of the Association is to improve the quality of the health care systems, at a European country level, and also wider for whom, from other countries, might be interested in the activities of the society.



The purpose of this European Society is to promote and strengthen dialogues, discussions on the present and the future of Medical Humanities and narrative medicine, for health professionals, researchers (both academics and non-academics), humanists, teachers and other professionals coming from every branch. All this with the aim to contribute to improve both the well-being of people who suffer from a physical condition or a mental illness, and the health workers, the caregivers, the social services and the citizenship.

Why Europe? Namely, the name Europe comes from Ancient Greek and means “a wide or open face”. that health is a Human Right endorsed and defended by the World Health Organization, and indeed the WHO-Europe has drawn up guidelines for narrative research¹ for this purpose which are a very important document to underline the equalitarian importance of narrative discipline and the clinical and scientific competence. Beyond this WHO- Europe has launched in November the first report concerning Art Therapy (Humanities for Health) and Clinical Outcomes². It is with open face that we declare that the Narrative Medicine and Medical Humanities people have not been left alone by the European Institutions.

On February 2020, the WHO- Europe acknowledged with an official letter the foundation and launch of the European Narrative Medicine Society, asking to the members to try to build a community of practice including the defined “lonely” people who work in isolation in different centres, hospitals, academies, not for profit organizations in Europe.

This European Society should be an “open face” and welcoming centre for the many Medical Humanities groups, who may belong to academic world, but also, other institutions and lay experts and single people experts and interested and fond of these disciplines/sciences/art.

The EUNAMES will work in integration with local, and international network, without becoming “Guardians” of who is doing a special kind of narrative medicine or who is not following the same approach. Schools are very many, and every individual has also a peculiar style to intend.

The value pillars of EUNAMES, as agreed during the meeting are:

- Plurality of approaches
- Inclusivity
- Multidisciplinary
- Open to every country also outside Europe
- Community of practice

The first actions agreed upon by the steering committee are the creation of a Survey for Europe which maps the Centers and/or the single people who are involved in this field. To have an idea of the

¹ <http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/cultural-contexts-of-health-the-use-of-narrative-research-in-the-health-sector-2016> (

² <http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/what-is-the-evidence-on-the-role-of-the-arts-in-improving-health-and-well-being-a-scoping-review-2019>



magnitude of the spreading of this disciplines, in an evidence base world, is something essential to track the people potentially able to contribute and benefit from this networking exercise.

Therefore, first aim of EUNAMES is to carry out a census for the 53 WHO-Europe countries to understand the terminology and the diffusion of narrative medicine and Humanities for Health: it will be carried out by Maria Giulia Marini together with Cinzia Colucci, however the other participants can contribute in sharing possible contacts.

This survey should not only be quantitative but also qualitative: the narratives behind of the reasons why these groups have been established, who were the main influencers, which kind of approaches are undertaken, are filed to explore in the survey. In the attachment, there is a possible narrated check list to send to our European contacts (but also contributes by other continents are very welcome to foster the plurality of approach). It will come together with a presentation letter.

The first results of these survey will be ready by October 2020 and will be shared globally.

At the moment, there is not a dedicated website which was to be opened but we will use as communication media the website www.narrativemedicine.eu and www.medicinanarrativa.it

Next meeting of the group will be arranged by Zoom and the next proposed day is on June, Friday 26, at 17 pm Italian Time (to be confirmed)

Maria Giulia Marini

Serving president of EUNAMES



Attachment 1:

Please, introduce yourself briefly, also specifying your educational background and your current activity

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Please, could you tell your story of how you became a fan of Humanities for Health and Narrative medicine.....

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People influencing you in this interest

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In which way do you think and feel that Humanities for health and Narrative Medicine can improve the quality of health care.....

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How do you work on Medical Humanities and Narrative Medicine:

- Independent, by yourself
- In local group ---- How many people?
- In virtual groups
- With particular acknowledged associations (please, name them...)

Please comment on your local and global network connections-----

The activities of yourself and/of your group in Humanities for Health and Narrative Medicine are (tick everything which is appropriated):

- Education to students in a university
- Education to health care providers in a university
- Education to health care providers in other institutions
- Research (qualitative)
- Research (qualitative and quantitative)
- Clinical practice
- Psychotherapy
- Social Practice
- Art therapist
- Theatre therapy
- Communications Training
- Self-care
- Taking care of the community
- Other-----
- Other-----
- Other-----

Please could you describe the way you run your activities in Medical Humanities and Narrative Medicine-----



Which are the biggest challenges you encounter when promoting/ disseminating Humanities for Health and Narrative Medicine-----

What would you like to receive from a Network such as the European Narrative Medicine Society?

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How would you like to contribute to this Network?

Thank you so much for having contributed to our common project.
We will share with all the participants the results of all the answers on the website by October 2020 www.narrativemedicine.eu

*Think of the seed of your were not born to live as brutes, but
to follow virtue and knowledge.
Dante*