

In memoriam of Prof. GianCarlo Panzica

GianCarlo Panzica passed away on July 21, 2022, after a long battle against cancer. Despite his illness, which he always fought with great discretion, GianCarlo has always been present and involved, until the end, in our group's decision-making activities, always giving his valuable scientific and personal contribution from afar.

GianCarlo, full professor of Comparative Anatomy, first, and then of Human Anatomy, was currently Honorary professor at the University of Turin and team leader of our group in Neuroendocrinology at the Neuroscience Institute Cavalieri Ottolenghi (NICO). In his academic career, he was director of the Department of Anatomy, Pharmacology, and Forensic Medicine and, more recently, of the Department of Neuroscience at the University of Turin. He has been a member of several scientific societies (Society for Neuroscience, Italian Society for Neuroscience - SINS, Society for Behavioral Neuroscience), for some of which he has served on the board of directors: he was currently president of the Italian Group for the study of Neuromorphology. Starting in 2001, every two years, he organized the international congress Steroids and Nervous System in Turin with his friend, Prof. Roberto Melcangi of the University of Milan, with the aim of bringing together international scientists from various disciplines (pharmacology, neuroendocrinology, psychiatry, molecular biology, behavior) to discuss the most recent studies on the influence of neuroactive steroids on the central and peripheral nervous systems.



Internationally renowned researcher, author of more than 200 publications, and with an H-index of 44, he has dedicated much of his research life to the study of sexual dimorphism in the nervous system and was well known for his extensive work on the anatomy and peptidergic innervation of the hypothalamus. He believed strongly in the idea that the two sexes should be studied and analyzed in parallel in basic research to better understand the biological mechanisms. His scientific curiosity in this regard, especially in earlier years, was such that, among his colleagues, he was known to ask the speaker, at the end of his/her oral communication, "Interesting but: what happens in females? Have you considered only males? And why?". Today, the importance of conducting scientific research in both sexes is increasingly strong in the scientific community, and he was absolutely delighted.

For more than 10 years, he had been interested in the action of endocrine disruptors on the nervous system. Through meetings, lectures, and third missions, he has always tried to raise awareness of the issue among young people. Moreover, together with a network of several neuroscientists, he was involved in a "battle" to raise awareness of endocrine disruptor exposure in the development of the nervous system among European Community decision-makers.

We, his alumni, will remember, in addition to his passion for anatomy, morphology, and the immense scientific curiosity that characterized him, his two fundamental cornerstones, which were independent of the type of research: the cult of the scientific image that had to be morphologically beautiful and accurate, and the precision and accuracy of scientific data. The statistical analysis of the data often turned into long hours of discussion.

GianCarlo was this and much more: a kind, gentle, curious, highly intelligent, and educated man who knew how to listen and advise. A person with whom it was nice to discuss everything: politics, literature, history, science, and sci-fiction. A person who would tell you about the last book he had read enthusiastically, and make you fall in love with new stories and authors.

As a professor, he has been much loved and respected by his students. With his words, charged with passion for research, he was able to communicate and explain engagingly and knowledgeably. Just as he made us fall in love with new stories, he made all his students fall in love with human anatomy and neuroanatomy, and generation after generation, many students still remember his voice, low, warm, and persuasive, with which he knew how to attract attention.

We miss you, and we will miss you a lot GianCarlo.

*Your alumni
Marilena, Brigitta, and Stefano*