

Il Centenario della Fondazione della “Clinica del Lavoro Luigi Devoto” di Milano (1902-2002). La struttura sanitaria più antica nel mondo per lo studio, il trattamento e la prevenzione delle malattie da lavoro

“Chi ignora il proprio passato non ha radici e chi non ha radici non ha neppure un futuro”
(Grieco et al, 1999)

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KEY WORDS

Clinica del Lavoro foundation; Luigi Devoto

SUMMARY

«Centenary of foundation of the “Clinica del Lavoro Luigi Devoto” of Milan (1902-2002). The oldest health structure in the world for the study, treatment and prevention of work-related diseases». *The foundation of the Clinica del Lavoro by Luigi Devoto cannot be dated back to the specific date of an event or, worse, to the official inauguration as has happened so far. It can rather be considered as a process started on November 20, 1902 (date of the first resolution by the Milan Municipality Council), continuing with the national law n. 365 of July 9, 1905, then with the laying of the first stone on December 11, 1907 bearing the motto of the Milanese School “In aliis vivimus, movemur et sumus” and finally the official inauguration on March 20, 1910. The Founder Luigi Devoto was born in 1864 at Borzonasca (Genoa) and took a degree of medicine and surgery at the Genoa University in 1888. After a period in Prague and then in Genoa, he was appointed temporary teacher of medical pathology in Pavia. He published several scientific contributions in different fields of occupational health (lead intoxication, ankylostomiasis, strain cardiopathy, etc.) and in other branches (tuberculosis, pellagra, etc.) that he considered as indirectly work-related diseases. He died in Milan in 1936. Three issues characterize the ingenious intuition of Luigi Devoto and his thirty-year direction of the Clinica del Lavoro: 1. Full respect for the principles of discipline and scientific method suggested by Bernardino Ramazzini; 2. The extremely broad conception of the diseases that had to be considered as “workers’ diseases”; 3. The constant social attention towards the application of scientific knowledge also through workers’ information and updating of regulations to improve working conditions. Many of the conflicts and events associated with the foundation of the Clinica del Lavoro can be summarized in the name chosen by the Founder. Actually to those asking why “Clinic of Work” and not “Clinic of Workers”, Devoto used to reply that it was work that was ill and therefore it was necessary to treat the work to prevent workers’ illnesses.*