



**Report 2013 from ARIR – Associazione Riabilitatori dell’Insufficienza Respiratoria -  
ASSOCIATION FOR THE REHABILITATION OF RESPIRATORY FAILURE – ARIR – Italy.  
[www.arirassociazione.org](http://www.arirassociazione.org)**

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## Summary

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### 1. News

- a. Fourteen years after the first international Conference of Reggio Emilia, the **2<sup>nd</sup> International ARIR Conference on Respiratory Physiotherapy** was held in Genoa during March 2013. More than *300 participants*, including physiotherapists, physicians, nurses, patients and representatives of industries met for a live discussion on the hot topics of respiratory care. Colleagues and scientific organizations applauded this conference with terrific enthusiasm.

Conference was divided into plenary and parallel session, addressing the issues relating to the management of patients in intensive care units, the airways clearance techniques, the management of sleep disorders and aerosol therapy. ARIR aim was to develop a live discussion on patients' respiratory management from hospital to home.

The twelve parallel sessions took the discussion further, analyzing the theoretical and technical-practical areas of intervention of respiratory physiotherapists: neuromuscular disease, major surgery, lung transplantation, mechanical ventilation, non invasive ventilation, palliative care, educational programs for optimization of adherence to treatment in chronic respiratory diseases.

Two round tables have addressed important topics. The first debate was dedicated to the professional status of the respiratory physiotherapist in Italy and in the world, with the participation of distinguished colleagues from and outside Europe, including some of the most representative associations (Italian Association of Physiotherapists, American Association of Respiratory Care and European Respiratory Care Association). The second moment moved the debate to the delicate issue of the transition from hospital to home, highlighting our potential role in the field of education and prevention.

- b. During February 2013, ARIR and the **Italian Association of Physiotherapists** (AIFI) signed for the first time an agreement aimed to promote advanced training of Physiotherapists. This represents a milestone in the history of Italian Physiotherapy. AIFI will support ARIR in the dissemination of respiratory care among scientific and institutional organisms.
- c. Since the increasing number of activities that ARIR is doing and the increased number of people referring to our website, (+220% visits) a **new version** of our website ([www.arirassociazione.org](http://www.arirassociazione.org)) will be launched in November 2013. Its main new features are:
  1. Online inscription to ARIR, its course and events;
  2. Online payment;
  3. Tablet and smartphone responsive;
  4. Tracking system of respiratory physiotherapist by region and province.
  5. Updated english version



- d. Starting from the initiative of the ERS school committee, the **HERMES** (Harmonizing Education in Respiratory Medicine for European Specialists) **Respiratory Physiotherapy** project moved forward. Our association has three representatives participating in this project (Francesco D'Abrosca, MSc PT, Sara Mariani PT and Luciana Ptacinsky PT) and the last ERS Conference held in Barcelona (September 2013) gave important results of the ongoing process:
  - 1 Production of a first draft of list of topics which were sent to National Representatives (50 people), according to the Delphi process;
  - 2 Generation of a revised list of topics which was sent to all members of the ERS Physiotherapy Group (9.2) (Delphi round two);
  - 3 Suggestions from all members of 9.2 Group generated the final of list of topics for the *syllabus*. These results will be presented at the next year ERS Conference in Munich.
- e. Last year the Lega Italiana Fibrosi Cistica Onlus – LIFC – [the **Non-Profit Italian Cystic Fibrosis League**] won the charity drive entitled "*Sosteniamo il Futuro*" sponsored by Fondazione Vodafone Italia with its project "Sport e Fibrosi Cistica? Perché no!" [**Sports and Cystic Fibrosis? Why Not!**]. The league has been able to provide the participating Italian regional CF centers with training program for 76 care providers, 19 one-year work and research scholarships for physiotherapists and equipment for physical assessment programs for all the CF centers involved.
- f. After the second one in 2006, ARIR is launching a **new book** published by Elsevier-Masson entitled "**Exercise training for patients with respiratory disease**". Fifteen chapters will help the reader in the evaluation of exercise performance, starting from the exercise physiology up to training modalities, described in detail by respiratory physiotherapists and physicians who work with ARIR. The book will be available in spring 2014.

## 2. Ongoing

- a. ARIR is continuing its work for **GARD – Italy** (Global Alliance Against Chronic Respiratory Disease). In the last general meeting held in Rome during January 2013, five new areas of intervention have been approved, becoming part of the Action Plan for 2013-2014:
  - i. Environment and respiratory diseases;
  - ii. Surveillance of respiratory diseases;
  - iii. Asthma and allergy in children: educational interventions;
  - iv. Smoking and home environment;
  - v. Continuity of care: respiratory failure.

Three board members of ARIR were nominated as referees of commission ii, iii and v, namely Emilia Privitera, MSc, PT, Sergio Zuffo, MSc, Pt and Marta Lazzeri, PT.
- b. Our association sponsored and is coordinating a controlled, randomized multicenter study on the "**Effects of home-based pulmonary rehabilitation in patients with severe or very severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)**". We are currently continuing enrollment of study participants. 182 patients have been enrolled so far. The data still remain to be analyzed and statistically processed.
- c. ARIR keeps coordinating a **multicenter randomized controlled study** on the "**Effectiveness of noninvasive ventilatory support in post pulmonary lobectomy physiotherapeutic treatment**". The study aims to determine if the addition of CPAP and NIV would be more effective than just physiotherapy alone in a random selection of patients who had undergone pulmonary lobectomy and bi-lobectomy. 50 patients have been enrolled so far.



- d. **Multicenter participation protocol for colorectal surgery** prepared by Società ERAS (Enhanced Recovery After Surgery Society) c/o l'U.O. Chirurgia Generale e d'Urgenza della Fondazione Policlinico sulla chirurgia colon retto [Department of General and Emergency Surgery of Fondazione Policlinico – Milan]. Enrollment is open.
- e. In conjunction with NITp [North Italian Transplant program] ARIR is working on the shared protocol for the **evaluation and respiratory physiotherapeutic treatment of lung transplant patients** launched last year (presented at the 2012 Congress of SISQT - Società Italiana per la Sicurezza e la Qualità nei Trapianti [Italian Association for Safety and Quality in Transplant Surgery]: *Rehabilitation in lung transplantation: a shared protocol development*. E. Privitera et al. U.O. Chirurgia Toracica e Trapianti di Polmone, Fondazione IRCCS Ca' Granda Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico, Milan. We are currently continuing enrollment of study participants.

### 3. Routine

As usual we are:

- **Disseminating information about respiratory physiotherapy and the importance of what we do in Italy**
- **Continuing education, training and teaching:**

As of today, more than 280 health-care facilities in Italy have turned to our association for ongoing training in respiratory care.

In addition to the ARIR Conference on Respiratory Physiotherapy, the course topics of this year have been:

- ✓ *Assessment and clinical evaluation of the respiratory apparatus; clinical and semeiotic respiratory examination; kinesiological examination of the thoracic-abdominal system.*
- ✓ *Pulmonary Function tests and the physiotherapist role*
- ✓ *Thoracic drainage in surgical patients: indications for respiratory physiotherapy*
- ✓ *COUGH: efficacy evaluation and treatment*
- ✓ *Positive expiratory pressure (PEP) and continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) for pulmonary re-expansion and airway clearance*
- ✓ *Early mobilization and training in Intensive care unit*
- ✓ *Respiratory physiotherapy in severe neuromotor disability*
- ✓ *Non Invasive Ventilation for COPD and neuromuscular diseases*
- ✓ *Base training course on respiratory physiotherapy*
- ✓ *Respiratory physiotherapy in infant and adolescents with respiratory impairments*

On the whole, and not counting university credits for the master's program, 144 continuing medical education (CME) credits were given in 2013 by ARIR.

- In conjunction with the University of Milan, we are continuing a:
  - **Master's Course in Physiotherapy and Respiratory Rehabilitation: the course will be held again in 2014** for its eighth consecutive year.
    - The eighth edition, this year, has 21 physiotherapists (128 participated so far).
  - The **Specialization Course on Sleep Disorders –OSAS –** will be starting for the second consecutive year in January 2014.

- **Publications**

ARIR publishes two journals:

- **"Rivista Italiana di Fisioterapia e Riabilitazione Respiratoria"**
  - and, in cooperation with AARC –on line :
- **"ARIR Selections from Respiratory Care and AARC Times"**



- **Affiliations**

Our association is affiliated with many associations and especially with the

- ✚ American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC)
- ✚ Italian Association of Physiotherapists (AIFI)
- ✚ Italian Association of Hospital Pneumologists (AIPO)
- ✚ Italian Society of Cystic Fibrosis (SIFC)
- ✚ European Respiratory Care Association (ERCA)

*A large group of Italian physiotherapists attended the recent European Respiratory Society (ERS) Congress in Barcelona (Spain) and the European Cystic Fibrosis Society (ECFS) Conference in Lisbon (Spain) with several posters.*

*One of the posters was accepted as oral presentation at ERS and concerned the NIV role in the ASL management (Garabelli et al) and the other one concerned the NIV use in CF at home, awarded as best case presentation (Gambazza et al) at ECFS.*

- **Communication**

Our **website** is also visible in English, and we are also on **Facebook**.

*For a full picture of what ARIR has done and is doing, see the report and slides presented at the previous ICRC Meetings, visit our website [www.arirassociazione.org](http://www.arirassociazione.org).*

#### 4. Future

ARIR is now working to promote projects that put more and more in touch hospitals with territorial services, in which respiratory physiotherapists could play as case-manager when dealing with respiratory diseases. This will be in line with the ongoing *process* that sees hospitals as acute setting facilities.

#### 5. Acknowledgments

The ARIR, representing Italian respiratory physiotherapists, is continuing its work for the establishment of respiratory care in Italy.

Our decade-long relationship with AARC has been stimulating and has helped us greatly in achieving our goals and pursuing our mission. As Sam Giordano said last year, we're all trying to make the respiratory care world smaller and better for our patients.

Many sincere thanks to the entire international group and to our colleagues.

Most cordially,  
Simone Gambazza and Sergio Zuffo,  
Anaheim, Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup> 2013.