



# In memory of Prof. Giuseppe Nappi (1939-2026), a headache medicine pioneer and the founder of *Confinia Cephalalgica*

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Professor Giuseppe Nappi passed away peacefully on April 7, 2026, retaining until his final days an extraordinary clarity of mind – the same clarity that had enabled him, only a few years earlier, to publish the book *Memoirs of an Octogenarian Neurologist*, in which he retraced the evolution of neuroscience between 1970 and 2020, a phenomenon he had experienced firsthand as one of its leading protagonists.

Giuseppe Nappi lived his life as a journey whose purpose was not so much the conquest of new territories, but rather the advancement of scientific knowledge in areas of neuroscience where body and mind coexist within a scientific, philosophical, and social mystery. It was a long, continuous, tireless journey in which he never allowed himself pauses to savor his achievements. His extraordinary inner drive compelled him to keep moving forward, always beyond, never wasting time because time itself moved too quickly. It was a long, dynamic, wonderful

journey made of projects, discoveries, intuitions, encounters, alliances, and synergies, in which Professor Nappi served as an example and a guide. He knew how to create realities and opportunities; he gave birth to ideas and research groups. In this sense, he was a true *maestro*, and for this reason, his legacy will continue to live on.

His journey started in a small town near Naples, but it was in Pavia that he found the fertile terrain to begin his academic career, culminating in the 1980s with his appointment as full professor of Neurology at the University of Pavia (1986) and as Scientific Director of the National Neurological Institute "Casimiro Mondino" (1989), and finally as full professor of Neurology at the "La Sapienza" University of Rome, where he retired from academic appointments in 2011. The new job in Rome did not prevent him from increasing his commitment and energy as Scientific Director of the National Neurological Institute in Pavia until 2016. Professor Nappi was the driving force behind the transformations the Institute underwent around the turn of the second millennium, including the inauguration of its new headquarters in 2003 and the continuous adaptation and optimization of the high standards of care and research for which it is renowned.

Professor Nappi was a builder and a man ahead of his time in many senses of the word. He founded one of the first Headache Centres in Italy (Pavia, 1971). He played a decisive role in the establishment of important scientific societies, including the Italian Society for the Study of Headaches (SISC), the European Headache Federation (EHF), both of which he would later serve as President, and the International Headache Society (IHS). He was also among the first to promote interuniversity collaborations by founding the Interuniversity Centre for Adaptive Disorders and Headaches (UCADH). Composed of several sections belonging to seven universities, this center facilitated the development of numerous multidisciplinary and multicenter research projects. He also founded a journal dedicated to the science of headaches and other related disorders called *Confinia Cephalalgica*, which is today the SISC's official journal.

Professor Nappi's work, however, extended far beyond the boundaries of Pavia. An internationally renowned scientist, he devoted himself to many areas of neurology, including neuroendocrinology, chronobiology, and neurodegenerative diseases, but it was, above all, in the field of headache disorders that he left a profound mark. He managed to create strong scientific and human bonds with researchers spread across the world, from Northern Europe to the United States and Latin America. In particular, he developed a close bond with the Danish group led by Professor Jes Olesen, with whom he collaborated closely on the first editions of the International

Classification of Headache Disorders, a milestone in the field. He forged important ties with the Belgian group of Professor Schoenen, emphasizing the central role of neurophysiology in the diagnosis and study of headache disorders. He also established strong scientific relationships with Professor Michael A. Moskowitz in Boston, Professor K. Michael A. Welch in Detroit, and Professor Otto Appenzeller in Albuquerque. Yet, it is in the Latin American region that Giuseppe Nappi invested a large part of his scientific and human endeavors, with people he came to cherish deeply, such as the late Professor Jorge Leston (Argentina) and Professor Edgar Raffaelli (Brazil), in addition to many others. Conscious of the limitations and the value of national languages in the transmission of scientific and social sciences, he supported the development of headache research in countries then considered emerging, especially in Eastern Europe and Latin America. He did it largely through the Italian Linguistic Group of the International Headache Society, which he coordinated for many years, as well as through numerous collaborative initiatives such as the Colombo 2000 Project.

Professor Nappi worked tirelessly to establish and promote the study of primary headaches as a field of extraordinary scientific, socioeconomic, and cultural importance, considering their complex pathophysiology, epidemiological impact, and

associated disability. If migraine has achieved the recognition and central role it enjoys today nationally and internationally, it is largely thanks to scholars such as Giuseppe Nappi, who anticipated the importance of many emerging issues and guided scientific research toward innovative directions, bringing knowledge in this complex field to levels unimaginable only a few decades ago.

His love for humanity led him to create the Italian Centre for Advanced Research in Neuroscience (CIRNA), a philanthropic foundation active in multiple fields. Among its aims were promoting the application of scientific discoveries to everyday clinical practice and creating a patient association (*Alleanza Cefalalgici*) to give voice and representation to patients suffering from headache disorders. In his tireless search for answers concerning the relationship between brain and mind, Professor Nappi also established a section of CIRNA dedicated to promoting activities in the field of neuro-philosophy.

He was not only an extraordinary scientist and visionary leader but also a true master to generations of students, physicians, and researchers, inspiring them through his intellectual wit, his search for answers, and an unwavering dedication to innovation, a legacy that will continue to guide the field of neuroscience for years to come.

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