



**Associazione Nazionale
CCSVI nella Sclerosi Multipla
O.N.L.U.S.**

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With copy to:

Professor M.A. Battaglia
Professor G.L Mancardi
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Main offices

Bologna, October 15th 2011

“Professor Mario Alberto Battaglia and a not declared conflict of interest in the CoSMo study Presentation”.

Dear Sirs/Madams

on Thursday 20th of October, Professor M.A. Battaglia (President of FISM) is going to speak during the fifth joint triennial congress ECTRIMS – ACTRIMS on behalf of Steering Committee of CoSMo study: “Observational Study of the Prevalence of CCSVI in Multiple Sclerosis and in Other Neurodegenerative Diseases”

Our Association has heard with astonishment what Prof. M.A. Battaglia publicly declared, referring about conflict of interest in the post notes of abstract of his speech: **“no conflict of interest to declare”.**ⁱ

The controversial matter of the relation between CCSVI and Multiple Sclerosis does not seem extraneous at all to the interests of pharmaceutical companies; several sectors of the public opinion and of patients perceive, rightly or not, this conflict of interest as a slowing down element for a free research on the matter.

Therefore we wonder if Professor Battaglia, being President of FISM (Italian Multiple Sclerosis Foundation) and Managing Director of AISM (Italian Multiple Sclerosis Association), would not have had to declare that the foundation that he chairs and the association that he presides, receive funds from pharmaceutical companies Biogen Dompè and Merck Serono, as you may check on their website.ⁱⁱ

Prof. Battaglia is to speak at the Congress on behalf of Steering Committee of CoSMo. Hence we believe it is logical that CoSMo study presentation should also denounce the conflict of interests of its main researchers, who have correctly declared in their recent scientific publications the numerous pharmaceutical companies with which they kept economic relationships.

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In fact, Prof. G. L. Mancardiⁱⁱⁱ declared to have kept economic relationships with the following companies: Bayer Schering, Biogen-Idec, Merck Serono, Sanofi-Aventis, whereas Prof. G. Comi^{iv v vi vii} kept relationships with Merck Serono, Novartis, Sanofi-Aventis, Teva Pharmaceuticals, Biogen-Dompé, Bayer Schering Pharma AG, Serono Symposia International Foundation.

We are aware of the strong influence that pharmaceutical industry exerts on the world research in the medical field; for this reason the declaration of conflict of interests is a fundamental instrument, maybe the unique instrument that patients have, to verify the scientific objectivity of the content and results of a study.

AISM has always declared the will to conduct its own epidemiologic study on MS and CCSVI with reliability, to protect the scientific truth and the patients, in order to give clear and concrete answers to the MS patients. We are strongly convinced that an association of patients should always verify the correctness to carry out a research study. Omissions of the conflict of interests do not help us to hope for correctness; it risks to create shadows on the seriousness of ECTRIMS itself.

In conclusion, considering the need of transparency towards patients and all the participants of your prestigious congress, we wonder if it is appropriate that you should solicit Prof. Battaglia to correct urgently his declaration, and that this rectification could appear in the convention proceedings.

Yours Faithfully,

Gisella Pandolfo

National President CCSVI nella SM – Onlus



Nicoletta Mantovani

Honorary President CCSVI nella SM – Onlus





- i _____ M.A. Battaglia “Observational Study of the Prevalence of CCSVI in Multiple Sclerosis and in Other Neurodegenerative Diseases”:
http://registration.akm.ch/einsicht.php?XNABSTRACT_ID=138724&XNSPRACHE_ID=2&XNKONGRESS_ID=150&XNMASKEN_ID=900
- ii Ringraziamenti AISM: <http://www.aim.it/index.aspx?codpage=ringraziamenti>
- iii A. Laroni , M. Bedognetti , A. Uccelli , E. Capello , G. L. Mancardi. Association of melanoma and natalizumab therapy in the Italian MS population: a second case report. *Neurol Sci* (2011) 32:181–182 DOI 10.1007/s10072-010-0427-x
- iv Jeffrey A. Cohen, M.D., Frederik Barkhof, M.D., Giancarlo Comi, M.D., Hans-Peter Hartung, M.D., Bhupendra O. Khatri, M.D., Xavier Montalban, M.D., Jean Pelletier, M.D., Ruggero Capra, M.D., Paolo Gallo, M.D., Guillermo Izquierdo, M.D., Klaus Tiel-Wilck, M.D., Ana de Vera, M.D., James Jin, Ph.D., Tracy Stites, Ph.D., Stacy Wu, M.D., Shreeram Aradhye, M.D., and Ludwig Kappos, M.D., for the TRANSFORMS Study Group.* Oral Fingolimod or Intramuscular Interferon for Relapsing Multiple Sclerosis. *The New England Journal of Medicine* - *n engl j med* 362;5 nejm.org february 4, 2010
- v Gavin Giovannoni, M.B., B.Ch., Ph.D., Giancarlo Comi, M.D., Stuart Cook, M.D., Kottil Rammohan, M.D., Peter Rieckmann, M.D., Per Soelberg Sørensen, M.D., D.M.Sc., Patrick Vermersch, M.D., Ph.D., Peter Chang, Ph.D., Anthony Hamlett, Ph.D., Bruno Musch, M.D., Ph.D., and Steven J. Greenberg, M.D., for the CLARITY Study Group. A Placebo-Controlled Trial of Oral Cladribine for Relapsing Multiple Sclerosis . *The New England Journal of Medicine* - *n engl j med* 362; 5 nejm.org - February 4, 2010
- vi John Petkau and Christoph Pohl Douglas Jeffery, Ludwig Kappos, Timon Bogumil, Volker Knappertz, Rupert Sandbrink, Karola Beckmann, Rick White, Douglas S Goodin, Hans-Peter Hartung, Paul O'Connor, Massimo Filippi, Barry Arnason, Giancarlo Comi, Stuart Cook. Neutralizing antibodies to interferon beta-1b multiple sclerosis: a clinico-radiographic paradox in the BEYOND trial. *Mult Scler* published online 27 September 2011 - DOI: 10.1177/1352458511418629
- vii Ralf Gold, Jerry S. Wolinsky, Maria Pia Amato and Giancarlo Comi . Evolving expectations around early management of multiple sclerosis . *Ther Adv Neurol Disord* (2010) 3(6) 351#367 DOI: 10.1177/ 1756285610385608 -

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