



28 April 2020

Dear Colleagues,

first of all the warmest thanks from me and from Prof. Santuari (who unfortunately, for family reasons, can not be with us) (our best wishes) for accepting our invitation to participate in the workshop dedicated to the topical and dramatic subject, for its social and economic implications, **"How will Covid-19 impact on balneology?"**

In the (ultra)thousand-year-old history of the balneology there have been difficult and changing periods that those who work in thermalism have been able to face and overcome. But never has an event of such magnitude! Today, as world Leaders of the balneology, with different competences and experiences and from various continents, we meet for a first reflection on what to do and propose to the Institutions and Society. This informal workshop is not a scientific meeting but like "brain storm" on three main questions :

-Health SPAs / thermal centres are healthcare facilities and deliver health care services: do we all agree upon this definition?

-is there any policy/action among those undertaken in the last years by Health Spas that you would revise ?

-how would you figure out health spas in the healthcare system? What role should they play in your opinion?

The answers, direct and concrete, will obviously be both on a national level and in international coordination. They may concern (for example:

-Safety and organization of Spa Centers

-New therapeutic/rehabilitative offers for those healed by COVID-19

-New prevention offers in the ONE HEALTH or CIRCULAR HEALTH concept.

This concept implies that humans and animals' health conditions as well as the environment quality are strictly intertwined and that an integrated management of public health is badly needed.

Against this background, balneology, which is firmly rooted in the Hippocratic tradition, fully comes within the concept of "One health", thus being part of the overall response of public authorities to the current pandemic.

In this perspective, health SPAs/Thermal Centers may play an important role in the implementation of public health policies and actions, especially with respect to prevention.

The proposal

FEMTEC intends to advocate a set of strategies whereby health SPAs/thermal centres are to:

- strengthen their health vocation also by setting up respiratory rehabilitation services for post-Covid-19 patients;
- critically revise their recent evolution;
- consider their own therapy/therapies to select the one/ones which can better fit with the new demand for health;
- develop a set of effective actions and plans in cooperation with GPs and local chemists;
- exploit modern digital technology, including telemedicine;
- offer their own expertise to national and regional health systems within partnership agreements;
- promote more scientific research projects;
- improve their own management and organizational patterns so that they may be more corresponding to new health, social and environmental needs;
- overcome their individual-centred approach to be part of an integrated and coordinated network, in accordance with their national traditions and legal system.
- Thanks once more and good work!
- Umberto Solimene Alceste Santuari