



June 2019

IACLE holds successful Educator Meeting at Rome-EAEO 2019

This year marks 40 years of IACLE in the Europe/Africa – Middle East region supporting the development of education in contact lenses. Italian members gathered in Rome last month to mark the occasion, as FIACLE Dr Fabrizio Zeri reports



For many years, IACLE has been arranging its meetings in conjunction with important local and international conferences. This happened on the occasion of the [2019 European Association of Optometry and Optics \(EAEO\) Annual Conference](#) in Rome. The day before the conference (17 May), [Roma Tre University](#) hosted the regional meeting of IACLE entitled '40 years of IACLE in Europe/Africa – Middle East supporting the development of education in contact lenses'.

The regional meeting was attended by 35 participants, most of them from Italy. **Professor Marco Barbieri**, head of the Optics and Optometry course at Roma Tre University welcomed attendees and introduced the 4-hour program.

Professor Luigi Lupelli, lecturer in contact lenses at Roma Tre, then opened the day with an amazing lecture about the history of IACLE entitled 'The first footsteps of IACLE in Europe'. Luigi joined IACLE at the end of the 80s and, later on, he became the first Italian FIACLE. His talk illustrated the meetings of IACLE in Europe during its first decade, when IACLE was formed by a small number of educators, and how it evolved to the much larger organization that has become the reference for all contact lens educators around the world.



At the end of his presentation, Luigi (center) was presented by IACLE with an Award of Recognition for his commitment to the development of contact lens practice in Italy, encouraging the next generation of Italian educators.

The second presentation was delivered by **Dr Fabrizio Zeri** (pictured right) of the University of Milano-Bicocca and [Aston University](#) in Birmingham, UK. Fabrizio presented the work in progress to realize the Italian version of the [New IACLE Contact Lens Course](#) (ICLC). Twenty-six educators are quickly moving ahead with the enterprise to release the course in Italian. Twelve lectures have been already translated and are currently under revision, and the remaining lectures are undergoing translation.

A roundtable discussion about contact lens education in Italy and Europe, co-chaired by Marco Barbieri (pictured above left) and Fabrizio, followed the first two presentations. **Alessandro Fossetti** from [IRSOO in Vinci](#), **Anto Rossetti** from [IBZ](#) and [Padua University](#), **Alessandro Borghesi** from the [University of Milano-Bicocca](#) and **Stefano Lorè** from Roma Tre University brought to the attention of the audience the development of contact lens education in Italy.

Contact lens programs started originally in institutes for opticians around the 50s and only in 2000 did contact lens education arrive at the academic level, when the first BSc course in Optics and Optometry was opened in Milan. Nowadays in Italy, it is possible to receive contact lens education on several levels, from public high schools for opticians, to private high schools for opticians and optometrists, and universities.



The second part of the roundtable moved to the experience in contact lens education in three different countries: Israel, Lebanon, and Switzerland, thanks to the presentations of **David Berkow**, **Fadi Harb** and **Philippe Seira** (pictured left) respectively. The three educators each described the syllabus in their own institutes that are not so different, especially for the theoretical background.

Particularly emotional was a brief video contribution from **Dr Hilmar Bussacker** (first IACLE President) interviewed by Phillippe about the development of contact lens education.

The round table closed with two contributions on the industry side. **Stefano Romandini**, President of the Italian Association of the largest contact lens manufacturers (Assottica) described how contact lens education and industries met in the past and how they can continue to collaborate for the health of contact lens wearers. Stefano mentioned the positive example of the Assottica meeting, which was born to improve contact lens education in Italy. Finally, **Nicoletta Losi**, President of the industry body Euromcontact, highlighted the importance of educators and manufacturers at a European level being able to share common objectives and strategies to develop the spread of contact lenses.

The final part of the conference dealt with two teaching methods potentially very useful in contact lens education: problem-based teaching and reflective practice. These presentations were delivered by Luigi Lupelli and **Alfredo Desiato** (affiliated at Roma Tre University and Aston University). The IACLE day was closed, as is traditional, with a group snapshot and a tour of the contact lens facilities at Roma Tre University.