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Valentina Tassinari, the legacy of a young scientist

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Valentina Tassinari (1983–2024)

With infinite sadness we learn that Dr. Valentina Tassinari is no longer among us. Valentina was a dear friend with a passion for research, an irreproachable spirit with a great sense of humanity and availability for others. She touched our lives and those of all the people who knew her with her grace and delicacy. In recent months she has become an emblem of determination, faith and hope, even in the face of the unimaginable difficulties for her sudden illness.

A molecular biologist, passionate about scientific research, she carried out this complex work with dedication and determination, successfully overcoming various difficulties. In 2008–2011 she completed her PhD, at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, on the meiosis of male germ cells. After a period of work at the Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital in Rome, and subsequently at the University of Rome "Sapienza", she returned to the University of Rome Tor Vergata where, in recent years, she worked in the Department of Experimental Medicine as a research fellow in biochemistry. She recently won a competition as Assistant Professor in molecular biology in our department for the degree course in Veterinary Medicine. Unfortunately, exactly on the day she was supposed to start working, she was hospitalized urgently in very severe condition. Valentina was fully integrated into the biochemistry research group, carrying out scientific projects with enthusiasm, discussing the experiments to be planned with students and colleagues and analysing the results obtained. This, even during the illness that struck her in the last period: she was always present and in contact with the laboratory. We can testify that all the conversations we had with her, when she was in hospital, ended with comments on the experiments and the next scientific activities to be carried out in the laboratory. Valentina has produced numerous important scientific contributions in these years, documented by her publications. Her studies focused on the molecular mechanisms of RNA editing and she had recently become passionate about metabolic reprogramming in neoplastic diseases. She also contributed to the teaching of biochemistry and molecular biology in our degree course.

Valentina also had a strong ability for scientific editorial activity and successfully worked as an editor for the

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journal *Biology Direct*, of Springer Nature, where she contributed significantly to the success of the journal. She soon became the primary leader, handling all manuscript submitted and resolving all the problems and requests by the other members of the editorial board.

What legacy leaves a young scientists? Regardless of the specific individual scientific papers, despite their value and high appreciation, what Valentina leaves to other young scientists is the human value, that is the enthusiasm, the dedication, the energy to discuss, improve and reach new frontiers of knowledge. She championed the cooperation within the other members of the scientific community in large.

Valentina will remain in our hearts as an example of dedication and humanity. We will greatly miss her curiosity and intelligence, her passion for research, her availability and kindness. We are close to Elisa and to little Leonardo, whom Valentina will follow from above in his growth.

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