



The Collegium Ramazzini and the Town of Carpi are proud to recognize

MORANDO SOFFRITTI

As Ramazzini Award recipient for 2022.

Morando Soffritti, MD is a physician trained in Oncology who has worked for nearly five decades to increase scientific understanding of the environmental causes of cancer. Dr. Soffritti has been a global leader in this noble effort. He has directed studies of the carcinogenicity of multiple chemical and physical agents including arsenic, aspartame, asbestos, benzene, formaldehyde, ionizing and non-ionizing radiation, mancozeb, and vinyl acetate. Dr. Soffritti has been a tireless advocate for cancer prevention. He has communicated his scientific findings to policy makers and the global public, and he has pushed relentlessly for policies that will prevent disease and save lives.

Morando Soffritti is a proud son of Bologna, and his life has been shaped by the history and the strongly independent tradition of this beautiful city. He attended medical school at the University of Bologna and received his MD degree there in 1974. He received additional training at the Royal Free Hospital in London and the US National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. He completed specialty training in Oncology at the University of Bologna in 1984 under the mentorship of Professor Cesare Maltoni, Co-Founder of the Collegium Ramazzini.

Dr. Soffritti's life's work has been dedicated to the Cesare Maltoni Cancer Research Center within the Ramazzini Institute, the sister institution of the Collegium Ramazzini, and one of the largest and most important independent toxicology laboratories in the world. He served as Deputy Scientific Director of the Ramazzini Institute from 1987 to 2001, and from 2001 to 2013, he was the Scientific Director. Since his retirement in 2013 he serves as Honorary President of the Ramazzini Institute. There, he designed and directed long-term carcinogenicity bioassays of dozens of compounds and agents. He supervised the training of more than 20 junior and senior researchers. He built relationships and collaborations with research centers around the world, among them the US National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the US National Cancer Institute, Columbia University, the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, and the Istituto Superiore di Sanità in Rome.

Dr. Soffritti has published more than 75 papers in the scientific literature. He has received multiple awards, including Honorary Citizenship in the city of Quito, Ecuador; the 3rd Irving J. Selikoff Memorial Award of the Collegium Ramazzini; and Knight for Merit of the Italian Republic bestowed by the President of the Republic.

Perhaps Dr. Soffritti's most well-known, controversial and ultimately most important scientific contributions were the studies he led with his dear colleague Dr. Fiorella Belpoggi of the chemical carcinogenesis of the artificial sweetener, aspartame after the sudden death of Prof. Maltoni in 2001 that initiated the studies in 1998. In these massive toxicologic studies. Dr. Soffritti and his team demonstrated that aspartame causes dose-related increases in cancer at multiple sites in experimentally exposed animals. Dr. Soffritti and his colleagues noted additionally that prenatal exposure of fetal rats through maternal dosing with aspartame



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during pregnancy caused cancers in the offspring at substantially lower exposure levels than in adults, a classic example of in *utero* carcinogenesis. Given the widespread consumption by expectant mothers of drinks sweetened with aspartame, this finding that aspartame may be linked to childhood cancer is of enormous importance to pediatrics, public health and preventive medicine.

The chemical manufacturing industry, the food industry, and the government agencies that those industries had captured attacked Dr. Soffritti and the Ramazzini Institute viciously over their findings on the carcinogenicity of aspartame. These bodies claimed without evidence that the Ramazzini Institute laboratories were poorly run, that the rodents there were infected, and that the lesions observed in the exposed animals represented inflammation and not cancer. Dr. Soffritti himself was vilified and ridiculed by these organizations. He suffered cruelly for his science. But he did not give in.

Now, after more than a decade of painstaking research, the ill-founded accusations that the chemical industry and its supporters directed against Dr. Soffritti and the Ramazzini Institute have been proven false. In 2020, a meticulous reanalysis of the original data on haematopoietic and lymphoid tumors in rats were undertaken by the Cesare Maltoni Cancer Research Center in partnership with the US National Toxicology Program. These collaborative studies robustly reaffirmed the carcinogenesis of aspartame. Dr. Soffritti and the Ramazzini Institute heroic research have been fully vindicated.

Morando Soffritti has been a Fellow of the Collegium Ramazzini since 1992. He has served since 2001 as our Secretary General. Through all these many years, he has been a steadying force and a voice of calm reason within the Collegium, and he has played a critical role in holding the Collegium together through good times and bad in the continuing struggle to protect workers and the environment from toxic chemicals. Dr. Morando Soffritti is a true follower of our patron, Bernardino Ramazzini. He has followed bravely and steadfastly in the footsteps of our founders, Professors Irving J. Selikoff and Cesare Maltoni.

It is an enormous privilege for the Collegium Ramazzini and the Town of Carpi to bestow the Ramazzini Award for 2022 upon our dear friend, beloved colleague, and public health hero – Morando Soffritti. We present this award, the highest honor of the Collegium Ramazzini, to Dr Soffritti in recognition of his many years of service to the Collegium Ramazzini, his leadership of the Ramazzini Institute, his multiple contributions to scientific understanding of chemical carcinogenesis, and his steadfast courage in the face of vicious and unrelenting attacks by the chemical industry.