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Rome, 25 October 2021

To whom it may concern

As you know, nephrolithiasis (kidney stone disease) is a condition with an increasing prevalence among both men and women, with most recent estimates suggesting a lifetime prevalence greater than 10% in the general population. Since nephrolithiasis usually affects people in working age and is highly recurrent, it is characterized by a significant economic burden placed on health systems, resulting in loss of working days and a large number of accesses to healthcare resources. Furthermore, nephrolithiasis has been associated with the development of serious outcomes, including fractures and chronic kidney disease needing dialysis, which in turn represent a significant expense for the health system. Thus, it is not surprising that health Institutions are committed to reduce the burden of this condition. As nephrologists, one of our key prerogatives is the study of potential mechanisms of nephrolithiasis through the careful investigation of internal and external balance of substances implicated in crystal and stone formation.

A critical aspect in the investigation of nephrolithiasis, as consistently recommended by all the major international scientific guidelines, is represented by the metabolic investigation, which entails one or more 24-h urine collections for the determination of pro- and antilithogenic substances; this in turn allows a tailored approach to dietary and pharmacological interventions to reduce the risk of recurrence and sequelae. Our scientific society (Società Italiana di Nefrologia, SIN) has instituted a Project Group (Gruppo di Progetto, GdP) aimed at performing research to fill the gaps in knowledge for this condition. On behalf of the GdP we are writing to highlight the following points:

1. The technical aspects of the metabolic investigation of nephrolithiasis are complex, and few local laboratories are equipped or experienced enough to perform a reliable metabolic investigation. As such, the service offered nationwide by BioHealth, characterized by gold-standard techniques, is of very high value for the kidney community and should be preserved. To the best of our knowledge, no such service exists anywhere in Europe
2. The wealth of data amassed during the years by BioHealth represents a unique opportunity to perform research in the field of nephrolithiasis, aimed at increasing our knowledge on the prevalence of risk factors for stone formation, their geographical distribution and their interplay with dietary habits and comorbidities. Performing the necessary steps to start the

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legal procedures to make such data available for research would be crucial for the growth of this field in the next years and we would strongly encourage it

We would be pleased to have a face-to-face meeting between our representatives to discuss those and other points in further detail.

Best regards,

Prof. Pietro Manuel Ferraro (GdP SIN Coordinator)

Prof. Giovanni Gambaro (GdP SIN)

Dr. Martino Marangella (GdP SIN)

Prof. Piergiorgio Messa (SIN President)

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