Since the beginning of 17th century, the advent of microscope (Figure 1) has allowed progress in the anatomical and pathological field. Specifically, using the microscope, it was possible to recognise the microstructure of different endocrine glands, their vasculature and innervation, and some pathological alterations responsible for endocrine disorders.

In 1814 René T.H. Laennec (1781-1826) (Figure 2) invented the stethoscope, the first device which could help clinicians in patient’s examination. It became very useful also for endocrinologists in the detection of the cardiovascular and pulmonary signs associated to some endocrine pathologies (i.e. thyroidopathies, disorders affecting the adrenal gland).

At the end of the 18th century, Georges L.L. de Buffon (1707-1788) published a longitudinal growth chart of the De Montbeillard’s son from birth to 18 years (Figure 3); this idea led, some years later, to the construction of similar curves standardised for sex and age, a very useful tool for paediatric endocrinologists to follow children’s growth and point out cases of growth deficiency.

A new frontier in the diagnostic field was opened at the end of the 19th century by the discoveries of x-rays (Figure 4) and radioactivity by Wilhelm C. Roentgen (1845-1923), Antoine Henri Becquerel (1852-1906) and Pierre (1859-1906) and Marie Curie (1867-1934).

Georg von Hevesy (1887-1966) was the first one who used radioactive isotope (Figure 5) in chemical and biological reactions, opening the way to specific biochemical and molecular studies, that led also to the discovery of the scintigraphy technique (Figure 6) some years later.