

NFOG Board Meeting Minutes 1/2015

Place: Park Inn Copenhagen Airport

Time: Wednesday May 6th, 17.00-20.00, Thursday 7th, 08.00-11.30, Friday 8th, 12.45-15.00

Present: Knut Hordnes (President), Thea Lousen (Treasurer), Tone Skeie-Jensen (Secretary General), Lotti Helström (SFOG), Juha Räsänen (SGY), Karen Reinhold Wøjdemann (DSOG), Jone Trovik (NGF), Ragnheiður Bjarnadóttir (FÍFK), Alexander Smáráson (new President of FÍFK from April 2015), Ganesh Acharya (Chief editor AOGS), Ulrik Schiøler Kesmodel (Scientific Committee Chairman), Tomi Mikkola (Educational Committee Chairman), Peter Secher (Webmaster), Anne Cathrine Hoffgaard Munk (NFYOG), Oskari Heikinheimo (President NFOG 2016)

1. Opening of the meeting Knut Hordnes (KH) opened the meeting, welcoming Alexander Smáráson back on the Board.

2. Approval of the agenda The agenda was approved.

3. Approval of the minutes from the last Board meeting The minutes were approved.

4. NFOG Educational Course/Educational Committee (EC) Tomi Mikkola (TM) informed of the forthcoming educational course. The EC had made a very good programme. The title of the course was Nordic OBGYN training – are we good enough? The main areas to be discussed were: 1. Trainers need training too, 2. Assessment, 3. Feedback, and 4. Examinations. Unfortunately there were not as many participants as one had hoped for, but around 60 attendees had signed up. TM will step down as the EC chairman at the meeting in April of 2016, and the EC suggests the Icelandic representative as the new chairman. The committee plans to visit the RCOG in London later this year, and the Board supports this plan.

5. NFOG 2016 The next NFOG Congress is to be held in Helsinki on June 12th-15th. Oskari Heikinheimo (OH) informed the Board of the status regarding the preparations so far made by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). All necessary reservations have been made. An advertisement for the congress is posted on the NFOG webpage, and a preliminary programme will soon be posted. Posters and handouts have been sent to all the national societies, and OH asked for an advertisement to be posted on the websites of the national societies and in their bulletins. AOGS will publish advertisements, and KH and OH will write an editorial to be published shortly after New Year. A large e-mail campaign has already been run to get sponsors, but it is considered to be too early to get binding agreements from the industry. All of the board members are encouraged to talk to their contacts within the industry. OH presented the preliminary programme, and the different sessions were discussed within the Board. OH will forward the preliminary programme to the board members, asking for written suggestions both on topics and lecturers. LOC and the SC are working together on finalizing the programme. There are many colleagues in private practice in Finland, and it is

important to have that in mind while preparing the programme in order to get their attendance. The possibility of asking Hans Rosling to give a plenary lecture was discussed. Also a wish to cover the issue of abuse of women has been forwarded.

The pre-congress courses will be held in the Finlandia Hall on Sunday June 12th. The NFOG session will be held on June 15th, and the Board discussed possible topics for this session. One topic discussed was the influence of economic interests on medical practice. The Board will have to conclude on the content of the NFOG session at the next meeting. The GA will be held on June 14th, from 1530-1730. The budget was discussed, and it was concluded that the fee has to be higher than in Stockholm, where the deficit was above 1 million DKK, and be at the level of comparable congresses. **It was decided by the Board** that the Congress fee will be 600 euro for early registration, 750 euro as the regular fee, and 850 euro for onsite registration. The fee for early registration of trainees will be 400 euro, and 450 for late registration. The participants from the Baltic countries will not get a reduced fee, as in 2014. The Congress dinner will be included in the congress fee. The fee for the pre-congress course has not yet been set, but it will be very reasonable.

6. Scientific Committee (SC) Ulrik Schiøler Kesmodel (USK) informed that an advertisement was put on the website prior to the deadline for applications to the Fund (March 1st 2015). Along with the advertising of the Fund in all the Nordic countries last year through a small one page article, the SC has been successful in promoting the Fund, receiving more applications (44) than ever before, totalling more than 1 million DKK. Unfortunately, a great number of applications did not fulfil the basic criteria mentioned and outlined in the instructions and on the application form. USK reiterated his statements from the last Board meeting (issue 5), that incorrect applications will not receive grants. A statement was posted on the NFOG website informing of this after the last application round in the autumn of 2014. Those not receiving grants will receive letters explaining the need to send correctly filled in applications, and an encouragement to apply again. USK raised the question of a possible upper limit for allocations, especially concerning overseas visits. The Board expressed confidence in the judgement of the SC members, and will leave it to the SC to decide on the amounts awarded. USK also reminded of the previous decision of the Board to withdraw money not used by the applicants within two years.

At the last Board meeting it was discussed if the "Board Initiatives" should have its own set of criteria for allocation of financial support. The GA in 2012 gave the Board the opportunity to support projects within NFOG with up to 250.000 DKK as they saw fit. The GA did not ask that criteria for allocations should be made (issue 13 in the minutes from the GA). The "Board Initiatives" is intended for projects that may not be covered by the bylaws of the Fund, and that may still be considered as good inter-Nordic projects. **It was decided by the Board** to leave it up to the Board to support a possible project on an independent basis.

7. Economy, budget and accounts Thea Lousen (TL) presented the budget and final result for 2014. Of all the major posts of the budget, only "courses, awards and prizes" had a bigger deficit than what was budgeted for. Due to the expenses related to the Congress dinner the result was -1.241.027 DKK. The final result for 2014 ended, however, at -153.580 DKK due to the fact that the financial results were above what was suggested in the budget. The budget for 2015 was presented. As this is not a congress year, it is expected that the result will be well within the budget.

The budget for AOGS in 2015 had taken into account the change in Chief Editor, but it did not foresee that there would be an Assistant Chief Editor in a 20% position. TL explained to the Board how these expenses will be covered within the posts in the budget for 2015. This

will cover the cost of approximately DKK 210.000 that needs to be reimbursed to Rigshospitalet for the services of Jens Langhoff-Roos.

8. Renegotiating the contract of the Editorial manager KH informed the Board of the ongoing negotiations with Editorial Manager Susana Benedet (SB). There is great satisfaction with the work she is doing for ACTA, and one wants her to continue in her position. SB had made some demands for renegotiating her contract, and this was discussed within the Board. She has not had an increase in salary since she was appointed, and it seemed reasonable to hold her salary at a level that is comparable to others in her position in Sweden. Further, she asked for a four-year contract. **It was decided by the Board** to offer the Editorial Manager a four-year contract from January 1st, 2016. The salary will be increased to SEK 32.000 per month from January 1st, 2016. A further increase to 33.000 will occur from January 1st, 2018 for the last two years of her contract. After this, a regulation of the salary will follow the general increase in wages in Sweden. Sahlgrenska University Hospital will be reimbursed for SB's salary and related social security benefits as overhead, and the hospital will provide an office for AOGS in Göteborg without further financial compensation. This offer was made to SB by KH, and SB has accepted the contract for four years starting January 1st, 2016.

9. AOGS (ACTA) KH informed of the renegotiated five-year contract with Wiley. The royalties to ACTA has been negotiated from 42% to 57%. The agreement includes 150 printed copies. NFOG has to pay for any extra copies printed. It has previously been decided that all OBGYN departments in the Nordic countries should receive a printed copy of AOGS. This is considered an important way of promoting the journal. It was reported from the Danish society that not all departments get their copies, which may be due to the fact that a contact person has not been appointed for that department. A list of the departments receiving AOGS will be provided to the Board. It is then up to the National chairmen to send a letter to the hospitals asking for the name of a contact person to whom the journal shall be sent, where that is lacking. The names of the contacts shall then be forwarded to Susana Benedet. Wiley wants to increase the journal subscription fees by 6%, and **the Board accepts their proposal**. Ganesh Acharya (GA) then informed of the status of AOGS after he took over as CE in January. Changes have been made to the International Editorial Board (IEB). All Associate Editors (AE) have been asked to propose 2 colleagues for the position as members of the IEB. A prerequisite is that they will be willing to review 10 manuscripts per year. The new IEB will have a maximum of 20 members, and so far 18 have been appointed, with all 6 continents represented. The international editors will also be encouraged to submit articles to AOGS and asked to write editorials and commentaries when appropriate. After an advertising and application process two new editors from Norway have been appointed in vacant positions. **The Board recommends** that the vacant positions of AE should be advertised by the national societies. There have been some further changes, as case reports and short reports will no longer be accepted. New author guidelines will be published in July 2015. There will also be some changes made to the layout. Major changes are in place to reduce the handling time of the manuscripts submitted, and the time used by the AE for review will be reduced. Papers that are to be rejected without review should get their refusal within a week. The reviewers will have a month to review the manuscripts. Authors already have an option of requesting fast-track handling for submissions reporting important breakthrough research findings. This rapid handling of the submitted manuscripts and improved author services will hopefully contribute to improving the impact factor and author satisfaction attracting better articles. This year AOGS will publish a supplement on Progesterone. It will be funded by a pharmaceutical company and yield approximately 25000 euro in revenue. The plan is also to publish annual theme issues. A theme issue on Foetal Cardiovascular Physiology has been announced and is

expected to be published early next year. GA further informed of the need to engage an Assistant Editor with expertise within reproductive medicine. Hopefully, one of the 2 new Swedish or 2 new Danish AE that need to be engaged this year will have this qualification. *From these minutes on the acronym AOGS will replace the use of ACTA.*

10. News from the National Societies Jone Trovik (NGF) informed that the most debated issue in the Norwegian society at present is the National Health authorities' decision on what method to use for determining the gestational age and expected date of delivery. There have traditionally been two methods used in Norway, depending on which University milieu one belongs to. NGF got consensus for their guidelines that were revised in 2014, where the 2 methods were put on an equal footing. NGF was not consulted before the authorities made their decision to give preference to one of the methods, and a survey shows that the hospitals have not changed their practice like the authorities instructed.

Further, e-learning courses in CTG/STAN are made under the direction of NGF. In Denmark there already is such an e-learning course, which may facilitate the ongoing work in NGF.

Karen Reinhold Wøjdemann (DSOG) informed that the Danish National Society held their annual national meeting in April, with the highest number of attendees ever. The meeting was considered a great success. The entire board of DSOG wants to attend the FIGO congress, with a special focus on international work. This will be reported back to the Danish society. DSOG has also decided to donate £ 1 for each of its members to support the GLOWM work of FIGO. DSOG is also looking into the reported side effects of the HPV vaccine, and the timing for vaccination. The society still supports HPV vaccination. There are many Danish guidelines, and it has been noted that guidelines dealing with gynaecological and obstetrical patients are made also by other specialities dealing especially with pregnant patients. DSOG is invited by the health authorities to participate in the development of guidelines, but the authorities do not automatically finance this work. The aim is to revise guidelines every 1-3 years. Guidelines on the use of NIPT are needed, and have been left to DSOG in collaboration with specialists in foetal medicine and genetics to work out. The intention is that the method should be made available to all women at risk, not only those in a position to pay. Lately, the board of DSOG has decided to focus on the senior colleagues, not only on the doctors in training. It was noted that the senior doctors and professors had stopped coming to the meetings, and contact has now been made with the leaders of the departments in order to form a network within the society. Hopefully this will reverse the negative trend.

Finally, KRW brought up the issue of the dosage of Vagifem. Vagifem 10 µg is the only dosage available in Denmark, and she suggested issuing a joint letter from the Nordic societies to the pharmaceutical companies asking that 25 µg again should be made available. No common decision was made.

Lotti Helström (SFOG) informed that the National health authorities in Sweden have decided that the trainees should have a number of courses for their specialist training, but these courses are not presently available. The health authorities have no intention of arranging the necessary courses, and the national medical societies are left to provide them without getting their expenses covered. Further, many courses traditionally held for the specialists are now "taken over" by the trainees, leaving the specialists without their usual courses to attend. Additionally, there is no predictability in what courses will be approved as part of the specialization. The candidates have experienced that similar courses are not approved for all trainees. The law on abortion has been discussed, as the conservative party wants to make changes. The right of reservation against performing the act of abortion has also been discussed. In Sweden (and in Finland) there is no possibility to reserve oneself as a health worker, while that is possible both in Norway and Denmark.

The safe delivery project seems to be a success. Fewer complications are reported, and the insurance companies are paying less to patients. So far no results have been published, but a PhD project is coupled to the programme. A similar project has been carried out in Denmark, and the reports that have been published did not show any benefit from the programme. Juha Räsänen (SGY) could report of a period without any "hot topics" for the Finnish society. The national meeting was held in April, with good speakers who were partly paid for by the NFOG fund. NIPT has been offered to patients at risk from the beginning of this year. It has been the aim of the Finnish health authorities to close delivery wards with less than 1000 deliveries, but this has been postponed as the health authorities are giving exemption to the smaller units for a two-year period. There has been a media debate on abortion also in Finland, but no changes have been made to the existing laws. Finally, there is an ongoing discussion on taking Russian patients into Finnish hospitals for treatment. The issue is controversial, as Finnish patients as a consequence may have to await treatment.

Ragnheiður Bjarnadóttir (FÍFK) told the Board that the strike among the doctors in Iceland had lasted for over 2 months, but that it ended with better pay and better working conditions, as were the demands. The changes in cervical cancer screening have been implemented, starting at 23 years of age, with a screening interval of 3 years.

At the annual meeting for all specialities in January, speakers from different specialities were invited to speak at a symposium on problems related to pregnancy, and this turned out to be a very successful symposium. At the annual meeting of FIFK in April, Alexander Smárason was appointed the new president of the society. At the same meeting FÍFK decided to offer to host the NFOG Congress of 2021 in Reykjavik. The new congress hall has been completed, and will be a good venue. The prices are relatively high, but within reasonable limits. This was well accepted by the NFOG Board, and **it was decided by the Board** to suggest to the GA in June of 2016 to accept Reykjavik as the host of NFOG 2021. AS will make the necessary reservations for a congress in the second week of June, 2021.

11. Evaluation of the educational course The Board congratulated the EC on a good course. There were a selection of good speakers, with topics such as "How to become a good trainer", "Assessment and evaluation", "Modern tools of assessment", "How to give and receive feedback", elucidated by examples from EBCOG/ENTOG and the Nordic countries. Unfortunately the discussion was not as active as at the last educational course in 2014. There were not as many trainees as in 2014, and that characterized the discussion.

There were comments on the venue, that the technology was inadequate and that the staff was not supportive. Some of the participants had also comments on the quality of the hotel. The next meeting may still be held in Copenhagen because of the easy access, but the Board should choose a different venue. Alternatively it will be held in Stockholm.

The Board discussed the format of the next meeting. The possibility of arranging a broader course, i.e. presenting "hot topics" from the different subspecialties was discussed (fertility, endoscopy, and others). The discussion will be continued at the next Board meeting.

12. www.NFOG.org Peter Secher (PS) informed of the status of the website. He is considering opening a face book account, like for AOGS. Possible issues of interest would be the NFOG Fund and the Congress. The translated guidelines of the national societies will be posted on the website. The Board is very satisfied with the work done with the website.

13. Guidelines Committee In the absence of Niels Ulbjerg (NU), KH informed of the present status. It has previously been decided that the national guidelines chosen for translation should be valid, and less than 5 years old. If the national guidelines are comprehensive, only a short summary should be presented. A table of content for each set of

national guidelines should also be presented. So far 9 chapters of the Norwegian, and 2 chapters from the Danish guidelines have been translated. Reynir Geirsson and others have offered to proofread the translations, but before making a decision issues such as timeframe and compensation have to be clarified. The next step may be to make common Nordic guidelines on some relevant topics. A monitoring of the visits made to the guidelines posted on the website could be done by PS. KH will contact NU to assure that the GC and the Board have a common understanding of the work that lies ahead. As a standing committee within the NFOG the chairman of the EC is expected to attend the Board meetings when possible.

14. NFYOG Anne Cathrine Hoffgaard Munk and NFYOG have worked with the EC on planning the current course. NFYOG is working on the possibility to arrange an e-learning course, to be discussed at their next meeting. It is considered a more efficient use of money, instead of travelling to a meeting. Further, they want to find a new campaign replacing the previous campaign "passing the knife", which has been a success within several of the Nordic countries. In Norway it has been adapted by the general surgeons. NFYOG is preparing for their part in the pre-congress course in Helsinki. They are planning for a more active event than a formal dinner, and are exploring several possibilities.

15. Future strategies of the NFOG Board At the previous meeting it was decided that this issue should be given some more room for discussion. The statutes of NFOG outline the tasks of the NFOG Board, and it is the opinion of the Board that it is attending to all of the objectives of the Nordic Society. The Board has to consider its capacity to take on new commitments. It is up to the GA to propose new areas for the NFOG to work with, and **the Board has decided to continue its present work**. The Board does, however, intend to increase its focus on international initiatives. It will try to find good ongoing Nordic initiatives that can be supported. The upcoming FIGO congress is considered a good arena in which to get an update on what is ongoing. It was suggested that the Board may help in sharing knowledge on participation in international work.

16. FIGO KH gave an update on the involvement of NFOG in the upcoming FIGO Congress in Vancouver. As has been previously decided NFOG gives no financial support, but has been asked to be an intermediary between the industry and the lecturers at the planned Ingemar Ingemarsson symposium. NFOG is asked to reimburse travel expenses donated by the industry after receiving receipts from the participants. This has been cleared by Ildals. This is opposed by SFOG, which will not support the symposium on the basis of gender inequality. There are 5 lecturers and 2 moderators, of which only one is a woman. SFOG points out that there are well-qualified women to give lectures on the topics in the programme. The Board discussed this, but came to the conclusion that it is too late to do anything about the programme at this stage. The Board may in a future similar situation be more alert to equal gender representation at international events. With the noted disapproval of SFOG, **the Board decided** to be an intermediary in reimbursing the travel expenses of the participants of the symposium. KH has been asked to be one of the moderators, and has accepted the invitation after consulting with the Board.

Seija Grénman is proposed for the position of Vice President of FIGO, with the full support of the other Nordic societies and the Board. It was discussed how the Nordic representatives may collaborate in promoting her candidacy. It was decided to print pamphlets, and Juha Räsänen will be in charge of this.

At the previous meeting it was suggested that Iceland, i.e. Ragnheiður Bjarnadóttir (RB), should be proposed as a new member of the FIGO Executive Board. RB informed the Board that she did not consider this the right time to propose yet another Nordic candidate, as Anette

Tønnes Pedersen is already a member of the Executive Board. Her candidacy would have a better chance of being accepted if forwarded at the Congress in 3 years. **The Board supported** this view. As for the workshops on “Women’s sexual and reproductive rights” run by RCOG, there have been no further workshops announced since our last meeting. Although no longer a member of the NFOG Board, RB will draft a letter for the website announcing the next workshop. Professor Lesley Regan, Vice President of Strategic Development at RCOG will be invited to hold a workshop at the pregress of NFOG 2016.

17. EBCOG The organization is working on a specialist exam that will be presented at the next congress in Istanbul. The exam will not have any official status, i.e. giving the holders a certificate to work within the EU. Further, work is ongoing within EBCOG to reorganize their many committees. The next meeting will be held in Utrecht.

18. Coming Board meetings The next Board meeting will be held in Helsinki on October 30th starting at 14.00, and concluding on November 1st at 12.00. The following meeting will be held in Reykjavik on April 1st-3rd of 2016.

19. Other business No issues were proposed for discussion.

Knut Hordnes
President

Tone Skeie-Jensen
Secretary General