

NFOG Board Meeting Minutes 2/2015

Place: Krapihovi, Tuusula and Hotel Scandic Simonkenttä, Helsinki
Time: Friday October 30th, 14.00-17.00, Saturday 31st, 09.00-17.00, Sunday November 1st, 09.00-12.00
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), Alexander Smáráson (FÍFK), Ganesh Acharya (Chief Editor AOGS), Seija Grénman (FIGO), Antti Perheentupa (Scientific Committee), 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.
- 2. Approval of the agenda** The agenda was approved.
- 3. Approval of the minutes from the previous Board meeting** The minutes were approved with minor adjustments.
- 4. Educational Committee (EC)** Tomi Mikkola (TM) gave the Board an update on the activities of the EC. The next meeting will be held in connection with a visit to the RCOG. The EC will meet with representatives responsible for the educational activity of the RCOG, and start planning the next educational course, to be held in 2017. TM asked the Board for suggestions to possible topics for this course. The possibility of arranging a broad "hot topics course", with issues from the different subspecialties was discussed, but it was difficult to see which group within the society that would benefit from this concept. After some discussion **the Board suggested** to hold an educational course with endocrinology as the topic. There are a number of issues that would potentially be of interest for a broad group of members of NFOG, both among private practitioners and colleagues working in the hospitals. It should be aimed at getting younger colleagues to attend. The format of the meeting will be two half days, starting day one at noon. Day two can be extended if necessary. The venue has not been decided, but Malmö was suggested in order to attract more Swedish participants. Malmö is easily accessible from Kastrup. TM will step down in June 2016, and Katrin Kristjánsdóttir is suggested as the new chairman of the EC.
- 5. NFOG 2016** Oskari Heikinheimo (OH) presented the outline of the programme for the congress to be held on June 12th-15th. The pre-congress course on Sunday will be held partly at the University hospital, and partly at the Finlandia Hall. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday three parallel sessions will be run, of which one will be free communications. The plenary sessions will be divided among gynaecological issues, obstetrics and cancer. Important pre-congress dates are February 29th, when abstract submission closes, and March 31st, which is the last date for early registration. Letters of acceptance for the abstracts will be sent out on March 15th, in order for those with accepted abstracts to obtain early registration. The members of the NFOG Board, and the members of the Scientific Committee (SC) must register before March 31st. Registration is done via www.nfog2016.fi. There will be an app available with the congress programme and abstracts, and only a small paper version will be printed with an overview of the activity. A possibility to view the abstracts via the congress home page will be available, and a pdf of the abstracts will be

available at the NFOG website after the congress. The responsibility for selecting the abstracts lies with the SC, with the help of the local committee when needed.

6. General Assembly 2016 (GA) The GA will be held on June 14th, from 1530-1730. Tone Skeie-Jensen (TSJ) asked the presidents of the National Societies to appoint a member that will constitute a nomination committee. The nominating committee shall find candidates for the position as president, treasurer and secretary general, to be presented for the GA. The treasurer has served for 3 periods, and the president and the secretary general do not wish to be re-elected. The next president should come from Denmark, and the treasurer should preferably come from a different country than the president. As Finland will be in line for the president after Denmark, the treasurer should preferably come from Sweden, Norway or Iceland. To seek representation from as many countries as possible, the aim should be to nominate a candidate for secretary general from a different country than that of the president and treasurer. As all three officers are leaving the Board at the same time, the current president is willing to continue on the Board for the rest of 2016 as support for the newly elected president.

The following suggestions will be made to the GA: In the enactments relating to ACTA, issue 6, it should be stated that the position of Chief Editor, as well as Associate Editors must be advertised. With regards to the Board Initiative, which was accepted by the GA in 2012 (GA assembly minutes issue 12), a suggested change will be made. The money made available for the Board in the Board Initiative, was to be used for Inter-Nordic collaboration. The Board has so far not spent any of the money, but now sees the possibility of supporting Nordic collaboration with the developing world (see issue 14 of the minutes). KH will, on behalf of the Board, propose for the GA that the Board Initiatives can be used on collaborative projects between the Nordic countries and the developing countries.

At the GA in 2014, it was decided to move the NFOG Congress to odd years from 2021, in order to avoid a conflict with the EBCOG Congress, which is held in even years. According to the bylaws a GA must be held within no later than every other year, and should typically be held in connection with the NFOG congress. In 2020 **the Board has decided** to hold the GA in association with the Educational Course, and hold a new GA at the NFOG 2021. This way the GA will be held within the timeframe of the bylaws.

7. Scientific committee (SC) On behalf of the SC Antti Perheentupa presented the recent applications for the fund, and explained the decisions behind the allocations of grants made by the SC. The amount available for grants was DKK 296.035, and the SC awarded DKK 234.174 in grants. A number of the applications were still incorrect, and the SC **has the support of the Board** to reject incorrect applications.

Further, the SC suggests that the young scientist awards should be presented on the website. It was also suggested that the theses selected by the SC for presentation at the NFOG congress should be presented on the website. Alexander Smárason will go through the archives to find the names of award recipients. The presidents of the National Societies are to suggest to the members of the SC candidates for the young scientist award.

8. Guidelines Committee (GC) Alexander Smárason presented the issues discussed at the last GC meeting. The work of the GC has so far been aimed at translating the national guidelines into English. At present mainly Danish and Norwegian guidelines have been translated. The translations of the Finnish guidelines are very brief, while the original guidelines are very extensive. It was suggested to use a somewhat more extensive version already available as basis for the translation. The Norwegian guidelines are translated by the authors of the respective chapters, while Reynir Geirsson has done the proof reading. Until the

price of the proof reading is known and accepted by the Board, no further work will be done. The list of national guidelines translated into English will be posted on the website. Further, it is desirable to have a link from the website to the national guidelines. It must be made sure, however, that there is no conflict of interest with the copyrights.

EBCOG is interested in publishing the national guidelines of the Nordic countries as they are presented, regardless of the scientific content, together with a short commentary from a specialist. AOGS, however, have a different approach to publishing guidelines. In order to publish guidelines in AOGS they must be submitted as articles, and will as such go through peer review. Guidelines related to very narrow subspecialty topics are of little interest to AOGS, as it is a general obstetrics and gynaecology journal. AOGS is interested in collaborating with EBCOG on the issue of publishing guidelines, but will have stricter requirements for quality.

AS informed the Board of the interest expressed by Danish midwives to take part in the work of the GC. **The Board** discussed the issue, but **decided against it**. The GC is not aimed exclusively at obstetrical issues, and the midwives will not be able to take part in the whole spectrum of issues the GC will work with. The GC is, however, at liberty to summon experts within a certain field, to partake in the discussion of a subject.

The GC suggests extending its activity by establishing new evidence based common Nordic guidelines for NFOG, together with a budget (see Minutes from the GC meeting 150915).

This will be extensive and costly for NFOG, and **the Board will at present not recommend such a strategy**. The Board would like to discuss the issue with Niels Ulbjerg at the next Board meeting. At present the Board suggests that the EC has its focus on translation of National guidelines into English, and improving their presentation on the website.

9. Economy, budget, and accounts Thea Lousen (TL) presented the budget and result so far for the period 2014-2016. The final result for 2015 is still not available, as quite a few expenses are still not accounted for. TL informed that the accountant, Ildals, has advised NFOG to place money currently placed in a bank account, approximately DKK 2 million, into bonds. The reason is that a savings account at present barely yields any interest. The rest of the NFOG fortune is already placed in low risk bonds. This was **accepted by the Board**. TL went through the budget for 2016, and outlined how the expenses related to the position of Jens Langhoff-Roos can be covered within the existing budget. It is the wish of the Chief Editor of AOGS, Ganesh Acharya (GA), to organize a seminar for the Editorial Board of AOGS, inviting some of its international editors as lecturers. Whether this is feasible within the budget will be decided by TL and KH when the result for 2015 is known.

10. AOGS (ACTA) KH and GA informed the Board of the discussion with the Norwegian "Publiseringsutvalg for medisinske fag" (NPUM), which has decided that AOGS is a level 1 journal. Approximately 20% of journals are level 2, and they are generally those most cited and with the highest impact factor. The reason for the decision to place AOGS at level 1 is that AOGS was regarded by NPUM as a mainly Nordic journal. In Sweden AOGS is considered a level 2 journal. Where the journal is placed is of importance as more authors are inclined to send their better quality manuscripts to a level 2 journal. KH and JT will send a written complaint to the NPUM, arguing that AOGS is indeed an international journal. Reynir Geirsson has asked NFOG to compensate Landspítali, Reykjavik, for their increased cost related to his salary. The increase is due to a general rise in the salary of Icelandic doctors. **The Board decided** that NFOG cannot refund a sum greater than what is defined in the contract.

GA then gave a presentation of the editorial strategy for AOGS. AOGS has quality as its trademark, and this will not be compromised. The journal must be promoted, and there is

ongoing effort to increase its visibility through social media and professional networks. The Chief Editor has recently spent three months in China, promoting the journal as well as lecturing on how to design research projects and write manuscripts.

AOGS will have a new front cover starting January 2016. There has been a substantial renewal of the International Editorial Board (IEB), with approximately 75% new editors. The total number of IEB members is 20. A prerequisite for becoming IEB member is that he/she is willing to review 10 manuscripts/year. There was some concern that the recruitment of new editors would be difficult with such a condition, but that has not been the case. There has been a gradual increase in the submission of articles from the UK, US and Australia, as well as countries within Europe and Asia, such as Italy, Turkey, China and Korea. This was perceived as a positive trend. The corresponding author and all the co-authors will be required to provide their ORCID id while submitting their manuscripts to AOGS. This is to secure the correct identity of the authors, and that they have read and are responsible for the content of the article.

The ISBA supplement, consisting of four articles and an editorial, is ready to be published. GA asks the Board for the possibility to use the expected surplus of this publication for the education of the editors. He wants to invite some editors at the International Editorial Board to attend the Editorial meeting in January and give lectures. TL will consider the possibility together with KH when the final result for 2015 is given. As previously mentioned, the salary of Jens Langhoff-Roos has to be allocated from within the existing budget, and this has the first priority.

AOGS has an impact factor of 2.426, and is the fourth ranked journal covering general obstetrics and gynaecology in the world. It is ranked as number 20 of all journals in the obstetrics and gynaecology category, including subspecialty journals. A continual focus on quality must be held in order to improve, and even retain, the impact factor. GA rejects approximately 40% of all manuscripts submitted to AOGS immediately after editorial evaluation and with comments for the authors. At present the rejection rate for articles submitted to AOGS in 2015 is 84.4 %. The time taken to get a review from AOGS has been reduced. Further, there is continual work ongoing to fight fraud.

The position of Assistant Chief Editor will be advertised in the journals of all the national societies. So far there have been two good assistant editors serving in this position, coming from Denmark and Sweden. It would be desirable if there were good applicants for the position also from Finland and Norway, but the best candidate will obviously be chosen. It is a two-year position, and the applicant must have a PhD. There is no requirement that the candidate is a specialist, but he/she must be fluent in English. GA will supervise the assistant editor closely.

Reynir Geirsson will, after Dec. 31st, no longer have a position within AOGS, except as a reviewer. Susana Benedet has signed a new contract for four years, and a new contract for rental of her office has been signed. A new cover of AOGS has been chosen, and it will be presented in January.

11. News from the National Societies Jone Trovik (NGF) informed of the recently held annual national meeting. With the financial support from the NFOG Fund, the scientific programme included lectures by M.Brännström and O.Heikinheimo, and both were very well received. As was referred at the last Board meeting, the Norwegian health authorities had decided that a single method should be used for determining gestational age/expected date of delivery nation-wide. NGF then recommended its members to use the National Guidelines that are published by NGF based on consensus within the Society, and what is accepted as best evidence. This was not in agreement with the recommendation made by the Health

authorities. It turns out that most hospitals have not changed their procedures despite the instructions from the health authorities, and both methods continue to be used in Norway. Karen Reinhold Wøjdemann (**DSOG**) informed of the ongoing public debate related to the possible serious side effects of the HPV vaccine, such as POTS syndrome. The vaccination programme started 10-12 years ago, and the last year several patients with POTS syndrome have been registered. There is work ongoing to verify if there is a connection to the vaccine, but so far no such connection has been proven. Clinics have been opened in all health regions to take care of these patients.

In Denmark low risk pregnancies have, for the past 10 years, been induced at week 41+4-5. This is thought to have contributed to a decrease in perinatal mortality by 1/3. Misoprostol is used for the induction. The midwives are, however, complaining of the increased workload related to the large number of inductions. Most of these patients are outpatients who only come to the hospital for their Misoprostol. Only risk patients are inpatients. Further, there is an increased focus on caesarean section, especially in relation to the indications for its use. Many from DSOG went to the FIGO congress, and participated at different levels. Finally, Sören Broström has been elected as the new director of the National Board of Health. Lotti Helström (**SFOG**) told the Board that the caesarean section rate in Linköping is only 11%. The induction rate is relatively low, but an increase in perinatal mortality has been shown. The debate concerning the safety of HPV vaccination is ongoing also in Sweden, as is the debate on conscientious objection to abortion. SFOG is active in arguing against introducing this option for gynaecologists. The Swedish specialist training programme runs over 5 years, and should contain two courses per year. The cost of participation in these courses is paid by the hospitals. The government decides on the content of the specialisation programme, but neither arranges nor pays for the courses. With the lack of responsibility taken by the authorities, SFOG finds it necessary to arrange a great number of courses. There have been reports of doctors in Sweden issuing "Certificates of virginity". An inquiry is made into the allegations, and SFOG has made a statement denouncing such practice. A debate has been ongoing regarding the resources used on midwife-run delivery wards (ABC-clinics). The care they provide is also given by regular delivery wards, at a lesser cost. A decision has been made by the authorities to close these clinics.

SFOG has issued an "advice" on miscarriage, not guidelines. A rather controversial part of the advice has been that in order to give the diagnose miscarriage by ultrasound one needs to have a certificate of competency in ultrasound, which requires extensive training.

Juha Räsänen (**SGY**) informed of the change of President of SGY that will take place in November. Seija Grénman will take over as the new President. A very important issue in Finland is that the downturn in the national economy results in cutbacks on allocations to the universities. Subsequently, this will hurt publically funded research.

Further, the new health care reform is not progressing as intended. Conscientious objection to abortion is prohibited in Finland, but politicians are discussing the possibility that it may be allowed. This is opposed by SGY.

Alexander Smáráson (**FÍFK**) could report that there are now 40 gynaecologists as members of the Icelandic Gynaecological Society. The recent strike among doctors resulted in higher wages, and more young doctors are returning to Iceland. After examining the whole genome of 160.000 Icelanders, there are challenging questions related to the follow up of those who have been shown to carry mutations that may lead to disease. There is a lot of information available that the health authorities have not decided on how to use.

The system for compensating the gynaecologist for being on call has been changed. If you are at home while on call you only get paid for the time you are on active duty. Previously there were fixed fees regardless of the amount of work done. This leaves doctors in less populated areas with a reduction in compensation compared to the previous system.

12. www.NFOG.org Peter Secher (PS) informed of the addition of the national guidelines to the website. So far they are in alphabetical order, but the guidelines will be divided into different categories, according to subject. The date of publication of the respective guidelines, as well as the names of the authors, will be added. The possibility of adding more news from the National Societies on the website was discussed, but this requires that news of interest are forwarded to the Webmaster. The National presidents will inquire among its members what kind of information they wish to have posted on the website. This issue will be discussed further at the next Board meeting.

PS informed the Board that he wants to step down as the Webmaster. It is up to the presidents of the National societies to suggest candidates for this position, and up to the Board to appoint. PS is willing to continue until a suitable candidate is found.

13. NFOG The NFOG have not held any meetings since the last Board meeting, but are planning to meet in Uppsala in 3 weeks. Work is, however, ongoing with the planning of the social event in connection with the pre-congress course in Helsinki. Further, NFOG are working on developing video-lectures for trainees, to be posted on the website.

14. FIGO Seija Grénman (SG) was at the General Assembly of FIGO, held in Vancouver, elected as Vice President. She is one of six representatives in the FIGO officers group, and the only woman. She was congratulated by the Board. Further, the Nordic countries are represented in the Executive Board of FIGO by Anette Tønnes Pedersen (Denmark), and the newly elected representative from Norway, Margit Steinholt. At the Congress Professor Tapani Luukkainen (Finland) and Marie Bixo (Sweden) both received awards. SG informed the Board of Lesley Regan's planned workshop on "Women's sexual and reproductive rights" to be held at the NFOG 2016 pre-congress course, and encouraged the members of the Board to attend. The intent of these workshops is to increase awareness of the fact that the rights of women are violated in so many respects, such as access to legal abortions, safe delivery, etc. There is a need to recruit new colleagues to hold such workshops in the future, and SG suggests that NFOG should reimburse expenses for colleagues who are willing to take on this task. NFOG has traditionally reimbursed Nordic members of the Executive Board of FIGO, but at present both Nordic representatives are funded by their respective societies. The activity of SG has been funded by NFOG prior to her becoming Vice President, but it is now funded by FIGO. If, in the future, the National societies are not able to fund the Nordic representatives to the FIGO Board, **the present Board encourages the future Board** to give such financial support. The Board discussed the possibility of using some of the resources of NFOG on international work, such as the workshops. SG further informed of the possibility for NFOG to financially support the development of good research and writing skills on the African continent. She suggested that the Chief Editor of AOGS should attend one meeting annually of the African Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (AFOG), and hold classes on research and the writing of manuscripts, with the financial support of NFOG. Another possibility, as suggested by GA, is to engage local academics to teach, and fund their activity. This should be done in collaboration with AOGS/NFOG. The Board discussed the possibility of using the Board Initiatives for this. In order to do so, the intent of the Board Initiative, as stated in the Minutes from the General Assembly of 2012 (issue 12) must be rephrased. **The Board will suggest for the GA** in 2016 to change the use of the Board Initiative to include Nordic collaborative work on an international level. This will open up for the possibility to give financial support both to such work as workshops on "Women's sexual and reproductive rights", and an African project on research and publication.

15. EBCOG KH informed the Board of the latest news from EBCOG. KH has been in contact with the President of EBCOG regarding guidelines published within the Nordic countries. EBCOG is interested in presenting the guidelines from the Nordic countries in the form they are presented at our website. The Board has no objection to this, and it will be discussed further with EBCOG. At the next EBCOG meeting KH will promote Bergen as the venue of the congress in 2020, with Jone Trovik as the congress president. Further, the board discussed the planned EBCOG exam, which will be held at the congress in Istanbul. EBCOG members are asked to submit questions for a multiple-choice exam. It was pointed out that there is an abundance of questions already available on internet. The exam will not come with an official certificate, but may be of use for doctors from outside Europe if they seek a position within Europe.

16. Education in leadership in OBGYN Karen Reinhold Wøjdeman (KRW) presented this concept to the Board, an issue that has been discussed within DSOG. An increasing number of hospitals and departments are lead by professionals with other backgrounds than medical doctors. A possible consequence of such experience is that doctors are losing influence on how they get to practise their medicine. In Denmark this has lead to the development of a programme for the education of Nordic doctors in medical leadership (Nordisk lederutviklingsforløp for leger). The training-programme is run by a professional company (Implement Consulting Group), and must be adapted to suite each speciality. Anaesthesiologists from the Nordic countries have already completed the programme, and according to KRW it was well received. DSOG are asking if this could be of interest to the other Nordic National Societies within the field of ObGyn. The price for the course is approximately DKK 40.000, and will have to be paid by the department of the participating doctor. The training will mainly be aimed at young colleagues, and focus on medical leadership. The course will be held with one training session in each country, and with teachers from the respective countries. KRW will send a summary of the course held for the anaesthesiologists to the presidents of the Nordic Societies, and they will discuss this proposal by DSOG within their societies. The issue will be on the agenda of the next Board meeting for a follow-up discussion.

17. Coming Board meetings The next meeting will be held in Reykjavik on April 1st-3rd. The meeting adjourns at 14.00 on Friday April 1st, and ends on Sunday 3rd at 12.00. Board meetings will be held in relation to NFOG 2016 in Helsinki. The meeting prior to the GA will be held on Sunday June 12th.

18. Other business No issues were discussed.

Knut Hordnes
President

Tone Skeie-Jensen
Secretary General