

NFOG Board Meeting Minutes 3/13

Place: Park Inn Copenhagen Airport

Time: Wednesday Nov. 6th, 13.15-16.30, Thursday 7th, 09.00-12.00, Friday 8th, 15.00-16.00.

Present: Göran Berg (President), Thea Lousen (Treasurer), Tone Skeie-Jensen (Secretary General), Johanna Mäenpää (SGY), Juha Räsänen (new chairman SGY from medio November), Kresten Rubek Petersen (DSOG), Harald Almström (SFOG) present only on Nov.6th, Knut Hordnes (NGF), Ragnheiður L. Bjarnadóttir (FÍFK), Alexander Smáráson (Scientific Committee Chairman), Thora Steingrimsdóttir (New Scientific Committee Chairman from after this meeting), Peter Secher (Webmaster) present only on Nov.6th, Reynir T. Geirsson (Acta Chief Editor), Tomi Mikkola (Educational Committee Chairman), Anne Cathrine Hoffgaard Munk (NFYOG), Seija Grenman (FIGO) present only on Nov. 6th., Angelica Linden Hirschberg and Aino Fianu Jonasson (LOC NFOG 2014) present for issue 4 of the minutes.

1. Opening of the meeting Göran Berg (GB) opened the meeting.

2. Approval of the agenda The agenda was approved with some adjustments.

3. Approval of the minutes from the NFOG Board meeting 2/13 The minutes were approved.

4. NFOG 2014 Magnus Westgren was unable to attend, and Angelica Linden Hirschberg (Vice President) from LOC gave a presentation of the status. Registration has been open since Oct. 1st, and submission of abstracts from Nov. 1st. Abstract deadline is March 1st, 2014. The pre-congress courses were presented, and they cover a wide range of topics in obst/gyn. All pre-congress courses are held on June 9th at Karolinska Institute. The practical courses will have limited attendance, but the lectures will be held at locations that can seat all registered participants. The courses are aimed mainly at trainees, but consultants are welcome to attend. In addition, pre-congress meetings such as the Nordic Robson Groups and the International Obstetric Surveillance System, will be held on June 9th. Details on all groups meeting are found on the website.

LOC is working hard at getting sponsors, but the view is that the companies are somewhat reluctant to sign contracts.

The congress fees (including VAT) are as follows: Admittance 4500 SEK, and 6000 SEK from May 1st. Trainees and Baltic states 2500 SEK. Pre-congress course 1000 SEK.

5. FIGO Seija Grenman (SG) gave a report from the FIGO Executive Board (EB) held in London in June. The FIGO voting structure was debated. Any change to the General Assembly (GA) voting structure represents a change to the FIGO constitution. If approved at the 2015 GA, it cannot come into effect until the 2018 GA. The EB has a strong gender bias, and also a lack of younger members. SG pointed out that the recruitment of younger members and more women to the FIGO EB must be prioritized.

The FIGO membership fee (£ 4.15 from 2013) is important to the economy of the organization, and some countries are believed to underreport their number of members. It has, among other things, been suggested that available statistics from each country should be used as grounds for calculating the membership-number, but not all countries have

available/reliable statistics. It was concluded by the FIGO EB that no methodology has been suggested that effectively improves the current system, which then will be maintained. A taskforce will, however, be established and report back at the EB meeting in 2014.

The voting system was also discussed at the EB meeting. There has to be a "CAP" (upper limit) on the number of votes any country can have, otherwise some countries will be able to rule by sheer numbers. Where the CAP should be set is so far undetermined. The Nordic countries as a whole have 8 votes, and it was suggested by the NFOG Board that no single country should have more than 7 votes.

SG presented a list of 21 concepts for consideration that have been circulating within the Nordic National Societies for comments. The different concepts were presented to the NFOG Board for discussion, and minutes were taken by RB from the discussion for SG to take to the next FIGO meeting.

Further, new reports/guidelines have been published by FIGO on the issues of the safety of HPV vaccines and the management of hereditary cancer. These are important reports, as several FIGO member countries are against vaccination. Several other initiatives have also been taken, such as prevention of unsafe abortion, management of fistula, and the use of misoprostol.

An African Federation of obst/gyn (AFOG) was established a year ago. 30 gyn/obst societies from Africa and the eastern Mediterranean countries participate in AFOG.

6. NFOG Educational course Tomi Mikkola (TM) informed the Board of the last details in the programme. There were 64 attendees from all the Nordic countries signed up for the course, including speakers and the NFOG Board. The ideas that come up in the discussion between the panel of speakers and the participants will be duly noted. The EC and the NFOG Board want ideas for its future work on the topic of common ground for educational issues within the Nordic countries.

7. Scientific Committee Alexander Smárason (AS) presented the applications for the NFOG Fund. It was the largest number of biannual applications ever, amounting to 1.302.683 DKK. The budget for this year was 650.000 DKK. In March 176.050 DKK was awarded, leaving approximately 473.950 DKK for the present distribution. However, it was estimated that about 90.000 DKK of unused previous grants also was available. AS had written to recipients of grants from 2010 and March 2011 that have so far not claimed their grants in part or totally. Several have returned their grants, and one has made a new application asking for a transfer of the old grant into a new one.

The Board had a discussion on the maximum amount of money (speaker's fee) that can be granted to Nordic speakers who are invited to national meetings. It was **decided by the Board** that a maximum of 5000 DKK can be granted for this purpose.

It was further **decided by the Board** that when the economy of the Fund allows it, a maximum of 8000 DKK can be granted for the covering of expenses related to attending courses outside the Nordic countries. At times this amount will be reduced due to the variation in available assets in the Fund.

The total sum granted from the Fund at this time was 557.271 DKK.

It was emphasized that only members of the NFOG are eligible for grants. The application form will be improved to make it easier to check if the applicants, or those who have costs reimbursed from grants, are NFOG members.

Finally, AS informed that the SC will be judging the abstracts submitted to NFOG 2014, together with representatives of LOC.

8. NFOG 2018 Kresten Rubek Petersen (KRP) informed the Board that DSOG had announced the opportunity to arrange the NFOG 2018, and that Odense and Helsingør had submitted applications. Odense was chosen by DSOG as the most suitable venue, after considering a number of criteria. As congress president has been proposed Bjarne Rønde Kristensen, Head of the Dept. of Obst. and Gyn., Odense University Hospital. **The Board accepts these suggestions, and will propose them at the GA in June 2014.**

9. Economy, budget and accounts Thea Lousen (TL) went through the different posts of the budget and results for 2013. There are still 2 months left of the year, and all invoices are consequently not submitted. TL could therefore only give assessments of the final results. She informed that all the member countries had made their membership payments, and that the economy of the organization is sound.

There will be a positive result for 2013, and 66% of the final sum will go to the Fund. This sum is estimated to be at least 500.000 DKK.

A suggestion was made that the SC should pick out, from its applications, good inter-Nordic collaboration projects for the Board to consider supporting. The Board has been given the authority by the 2012 GA to use 250.000 DKK (named NFOG initiatives), for suitable projects. As stated in the minutes from the GA "It will be up to the Board to decide which projects to support, and the Board shall report the outcome of such endorsements to the GA". The inter-Nordic collaborative projects suggested by the SC will be assessed by the Board, and may receive extra funding.

TL commented on the variable time it takes before invoices are refunded. She forwards the invoices to Ildal, and it may take time before the money is reimbursed. If an e-mail address is written on the invoice, Ildal will notify that the invoice has been received.

10. ACTA Reynir T. Geirsson (RG) informed that the history of NFOG by PeO Jansson is to be published in the December issue of Acta. Further, a list of completed Nordic thesis' is made twice yearly by Editorial Manager Susana Benedet. The production editor has been moved to Singapore, which is less accessible. RG has participated on various meetings, increasing the international awareness of AOGS. Online use is increasing. All members will receive information about the new app., and so far more than 800 have registered. This year Acta has received 75-80 manuscripts/month, and the rejection rate is nearly 85%. Not counting the April AIP theme issue, the distribution of obstetric and gynaecological articles is about 50:50. RG gave a presentation of the profile of the countries of origin of the authors. The Nordic countries account for 47% of the submitted articles. Denmark>Sweden>Norway>Finland. RG rejects approximately 40% of the submitted articles before per-review.

There will be some changes in the editorial staff in 2014. Lisbeth Nilas and Henriette Svarre-Nielsen are leaving. The chairmen of the national societies will advertise for new editors, and an advertisement has gone out for a new Assistant Chief Editor.

About 33% of the published articles are never cited, and the Nordic publications are more frequently cited. Effort will be made to try to identify these articles before they are accepted.

Some tasks for 2014: * Ensure that the NFOG members are signed up for on-line reception.

* Reduce the number of published items to help increase the impact factor. * Reduce short research reports. * Employ a 4th Associate Editor for Sweden and Denmark.

11. NFYOG Anne Cathrine Hoffgaard Munk (ACHM) reported from the last meeting of NFYOG in Reykjavik, which mainly was devoted to the coming educational course. The presentations from the course will be used as a basis for discussion with trainees in the Nordic countries. Further, NFYOG is planning to arrange a meeting for trainees on June 8th in Stockholm, prior to the pre-congress courses. A similar event was arranged in 2012 in Bergen,

and was successful. Approximately 60 trainees attended. Focus will be put on the oral presentations at the congress. It is an important arena for trainees to get experience at presenting their research.

NFYOG is focusing on exchanging good projects between the Nordic countries. A good example is the Danish initiative "Passing the knife", that will now be implemented in Sweden. The aim is to improve the surgical training by making the trainees better prepared for each surgical procedure.

A new campaign is starting in Denmark, aimed at recruiting male trainees to the field of obst/gyn. Young male role models will present to coming colleagues what it is like to work in the field of gyn/obst. If successful, this may be used in the other Nordic countries.

12. EBCOG The Board had a discussion on its collaboration with EBCOG. KH informed of Norway's attempt at the Bratislava Council meeting to get to arrange the next ENTOG meeting. Oslo lost to the Netherlands, which has arranged several previous meetings. The difficulty in making an impact in EBCOG, which is a large and conservative organization, was discussed. It was **decided by the Board** that before future EBCOG meetings the leaders of the National Societies will correspond by mail in order to find common topics of interest. Juha Räsänen will have the responsibility of taking mail contact with the other national chairmen prior to the next EBCOG meeting.

13. The NFOG archives The Secretary General is responsible for the archives of NFOG. RG has looked for written material related to NFOG, but nothing has been found. The history of NFOG by PeO Jansson to be published in the December issue of ACTA is largely based on the memory of NFOG members. Minutes and annual reports have consecutively been posted on the NFOG website since 2008. The current secretary general has no archive material on paper, only computerized. It is **decided by the Board** that all available archive material that is currently kept by the Secretary General, the SC and EC, is to be handed over to the Acta Editorial Manager in Göteborg. All matters related to the budget and accounts are in the archives of Ildal. TL will discuss with Ildal if there are matters that should rather be filed in Göteborg. Final information about the practical aspect of handling archive material will be given by TSJ at the next meeting.

14. Guideline Committee The names submitted as members of the Guideline Committee (GC), to be established by the NFOG Board, are: Ritva Hurskainen (Finland), Niels Uldbjerg (Denmark), Knut Hordnes (Norway), Alexander Smárason (Iceland), and Pia Teleman (Sweden). The members of the GC will start working on a mandate for the future work of the committee, and prepare an amendment for the GA at NFOG 2014. The Danish Society has already established guideline committees in obst and gyn, and is very willing to give advice.

15. News from the National Societies Johanna Mäenpää (SGY) informed of the change of leadership in the Finish society. After the national meeting medio November Juha Räsänen will take over as chairman, and Seija Grenman as vice-chairman. There are upcoming EBCOG audits, with hospital visits and audit of the residency programme. Finland's experience with the EBCOG auditing system is good.

Further, JM informed that there is an ongoing renewal of the health care system, and that the trainee system is being reviewed. The results of these processes will be known in a few months.

Knut Hordnes (NGF) informed of the change of leadership in NGF. From Jan. 1st, Jone Trovik is the new leader. Further, he informed of the newly elected government's plan to allow private practitioners to refrain from referring patients to clinics for legal abortion on

ethical grounds. NGF has made a clear and strong statement that it will not accept an undermining of women's right to access abortion.

NGF has started the renewed process of auditing the use of caesarean section (CS) in Norway. This has been done previously, and the main aims are to establish the indications given for CS, and to make an effort at reducing the frequency. The kick-off for the project will be at a meeting where all the obstetrical wards will be represented, on Nov. 21.-22. RG welcomed the results for publication in ACTA.

The audit of gynaecological cases reported to the "Norsk pasientskade erstatning", a follow-up of the work done on obstetrical cases, is now pending final funding before it can start as a PhD project.

Ragnheiður L. Bjarnadóttir (**FÍFK**) informed that there will be a visit by EBCOG to Landspítali in Reykjavik, with the aim of accrediting the trainee programme. FÍFK has had a meeting with the health authorities on surrogacy, and the answers given by FÍFK were found acceptable.

In Iceland the rate of home deliveries has increased over the last 10 years, and is at present 2,2 %. Studies have shown the inferior outcome of babies after home deliveries, and the Directory of Health will be requested to revise the guidelines on where deliveries should take place.

FÍFK does not consider it advisable for primiparas to deliver at home.

Further, RB informed that cervical screening from now on will be done every 3 years after the age of 23, as opposed to every 2nd year, from the age of 20, which is current practice.

Kresten Rubek Petersen (**DSOG**) informed of the opening of a publicly funded birth clinic run by midwives, where no doctors are associated. The Danish "Sunnhedsstyrelse" protested, but were not heard. The doctors do, however, have the possibility of influencing the selection of patients by picking out the high-risk patients.

Then there is the Danish issue with Misoprostol. The National Board of Health is requested to give recommendations for the use of prostaglandins. Further, the National Board of health will also make national guidelines on dystocia and PCOS.

Göran Berg (**SFOG**) reported that the discussion about the use of Misoprostol in our speciality once again has started after comments made in the media. The Swedish Drug Agency (Läkemedelsverket) has critically commented on the use of Misoprostol, whereas the Swedish Board of Health (Socialstyrelsen) is starting an evaluation of all the different methods of inducing labour and abortion. Hopefully this evaluation will end the discussion once and for all.

16. The NFOG Board to be proposed for the next GA GB will step down as President at the next GA, as he then has served a 2+2 year period. The next country in line for holding the presidency is Iceland. The Icelandic members of the Board decline to propose an Icelandic candidate for President, and Norway is the next nation in line. The Norwegian gyn/obst society has, on the GA of its annual meeting, decided to endorse Knut Hordnes as their candidate for the next President of NFOG, to be elected at the GA in June. **The NFOG Board support** Knut Hordnes as the new President elect. The treasurer has served 4+2 years, and is willing to stay on for another 2-year period. The Secretary General has served 4 years, and is also willing to stay on for another 2 years. **This will be proposed at the GA.**

RB has been assigned the task of presenting the nominations to the GA.

17. Follow-up of the educational course The NFOG Board concluded that the course had been successful in the sense that the lectures were good, and that the concluding discussion had been very active and focused on future initiatives. Take the best parts of the Nordic educational systems and try to find a common ground.

There were 4 main points from the discussion:

- * To try to find the best methods of *evaluating the trainees* and the environment for learning (work based assessment, possibly combined with exams). If a good system for work based assessment can be made, this may be useful internationally (Ringstedt).
- * Harmonize the Nordic *courses* for trainees. Possibly arrange common courses in English.
- * Educate the supervisors/trainers (how to train the trainees). Common courses for all the Nordic countries arranged by NFOG.
- * Evaluate the Universities/training arenas.

The following discussion within the Board concluded that the EC have to narrow it down to a manageable task. It was suggested that the EC should concentrate on the evaluation of trainees and training the trainees. Possibly arrange a course in the spring of 2015. The EC and NFYOG have to define their working relationship regarding this issue.

Further, **the Board made notes to ask the local EC's to:**

- find out if courses arranged in the other Nordic countries can be approved in their country (possible in Norway)
- choose the "best" teaching hospital within the Nordic countries, and give that hospital a recognition at NFOG 2014
- comment on how to improve the use of web-communication

18. Coming Board meetings The next Board meeting will be held in Stockholm on April 3rd-4th.

19. Other business

- * The issue of the collaboration with LOC responsible for the NFOG Congresses was discussed. The NFOG Board has the full responsibility of the NFOG Congress, including the scientific programme. The SC are delegated the responsibility of the scientific programme by the Board, and collaborates with LOC. It is **decided by the Board** to propose a clarification of the roles of the SC and LOC, as stated in the Special enactment relating to the NFOG Congress, for the GA in Stockholm.
- * Harald Almström made the suggestion that the President of RCOG should be invited as a guest of the Board to NFOG 2014. **The proposal was accepted**, and GB will send the invitation.
- * EBCOG has invited Norway to apply for the congress in 2018, and KH asked the Board for its view. The EBCOG Congress is seen as a competitor to the NFOG Congress, as it is held in May of the same year as the NFOG Congress. Moving the NFOG Congress to the alternating year has previously been proposed to the GA, but it has so far been turned down. It **was decided by the Board** to discuss at the GA moving the NFOG 2020 to 2021.

Göran Berg
President NFOG

Tone Skeie-Jensen
Secretary General