

NFOG Board Meeting Minutes 3/2014

Place: Soria Moria Hotel, Oslo

Time: Friday November 7th, 2014, 11.00-18.00, Saturday November 8th, 09.00-12.00

Present: Knut Hordnes (President), Thea Lousen (Treasurer), Tone Skeie-Jensen (Secretary General), Juha Räsänen (SGY), Karen Reinhold Wøjdemann (DSOG), Harald Almström (SFOG), Lotti Helström (new President of SFOG from January 2015), Ragnheidður Bjarnadóttir (FÍFK), Reynir T. Geirsson (Chief editor ACTA), Ganesh Acharya (new Chief editor of ACTA from January 2015), Ulrik Schiöler Kesmodel (Scientific Committee Chairman), Tomi Mikkola (Educational Committee Chairman), Peter Secher (Webmaster), Seija Grénman (FIGO), Anne Cathrine Hoffgaard Munk (NFYOG), Oskari Heikinheimo (President NFOG 2016), Magnus Westgren (President NFOG 2014)

- 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 last Board meeting** The minutes were approved.
- 4. NFOG 2014** Magnus Westgren (MW) had prior to the meeting sent his report from NFOG 2014 to the members of the Board. He presented the main issues at the meeting. There were 881 registered delegates. He especially commented on the good attendance from Sweden, as the Swedish attendance at previous congresses has been percent wise lower than that of the other Nordic countries. He also commented on the good attendance from the Baltic countries, especially Estonia and Lithuania. It will be important to focus on those countries also in relation to future congresses. The fee for attendees from the Baltic countries was the same as for the trainees. 113 delegates from the industry attended, with 2 gold and 3 bronze sponsors. There were 43 commercial, and 1 charitable stand. MW suggested that the recruitment of delegates should start a year ahead of the next congress. ICS, the Danish company used for commercial contacts, was not considered very useful. Members of LOC ended up having to contact the sponsors, and the money used did not seem well spent. The firm recommended insurance for the participants, but it is unclear if that was necessary. 357 abstracts were submitted, and most from Sweden. The pre-congress consisted of 12 courses with as many as 264 participants. It did, however, raise concern that many of the young delegates only attended the pre-congress, and not the main programme. It is considered very important to engage young colleagues and trainees for future congresses as they represent the future of NFOG.
MW went on to present the result of the Congress, which was SEK 126 004, before the expenses of the Congress dinner was taken into account. The dinner is included in the congress fee, and is paid for by NFOG. This is important, as money from the sponsors shall not be used for that purpose. It was suggested to name the dinner the "NFOG dinner" at future congresses, as it was in Bergen. MW gave a detailed account of the expenses, that amounted to SEK 4 725 220 (excl VAT). There was a net loss from the NFOG Congress of 2014, as is reported under "Economy, budget and accounts".

Most delegates had registered 3 months prior to the meeting, within the deadline for early registration.

The possibility of asking the invited speakers to cover their own travel and hotel expenses was discussed, but was decided against. It was, however, discussed to set a possible upper limit for travel expenses, at least for the Nordic speakers, as it was at NFOG 2012. **A decision was not made by the Board, but was left to LOC to decide.**

MW gave an evaluation of the Congress. At our previous Board meeting comments had been made with regards to the organization of the poster sessions, which could have been better arranged. MW agreed to that. The poster session in Bergen seemed to function well with selected posters for presentation, allowing 3 slides per presenter. Some suggested issues for the next congress made by the delegates, were written in his report.

LOC in Stockholm put in a lot of effort to attract Swedish participants, and it was considered a success. MW visited the Nordic countries' national meetings, presenting the congress, and viewed this as an important initiative to attract delegates. The possibility of arranging the congress together with the annual Swedish meeting the next time it is to be held in Sweden was discussed.

The industry had some complaints, mainly that their stands were poorly visited. It was commented by the board that it is also up to the exhibitors to present themselves in a way that will attract delegates to their stands.

The NFOG representative was very satisfied with the effort that had been made to attract young participants, which had been a success. To improve the attendance even further, it was suggested that effort must be made to get them to stay for the entire congress.

The Board extended their thanks to MW and LOC for arranging a very successful congress.

5. Scientific Committee Ulrik Schiöler Kesmodel (USK) informed the Board that approximately 1/3 of the applications for grants from the Fund were incorrect according to the instructions, i.e. not in English, lacking budget, lacking a plan for the project, etc. The instructions are clearly stated on the website, and the SC have repeatedly informed of the formalities regarding the applications, both in individual letters, and through the National bulletins. The SC is going to inform the applicants submitting incomplete applications individually both now and after the March 1st deadline, explaining the reason for the rejection. From the fall of 2015 standard letters informing that the applications did not fill the criteria will be sent. There were, however, many good applications, and most were granted the sums they applied for. The sum available to the Fund for 2014 was DKK 684 076. Of this 289 346 was given as grants in March, leaving DKK 394 730 of which DKK 227 354 was granted. USK went through the grounds for rejecting the applications that were not awarded grants. It was suggested that a new letter should be written for publication in the National bulletins and the NFOG website, informing of the high rejection rate due to incorrect applications. The SC is going to change the application form, and they want the applications in a single file excluding zip-files in the future.

The Board has previously asked the SC to inform of good multicenter trial applications sent to the Fund, and that lack adequate funding. From 2012 the Board has had DKK 250 000,- available, named the Board Initiatives, that is to be used for funding Nordic initiatives not covered by the Fund (issue 13 in the Minutes of the General Assembly from 2012). USK asked the Board of the prerequisites for getting support from the Board Initiatives. So far such conditions have not been in writing, but **it was decided by the Board** that KH and USK are to suggest some criteria and present them to the Board for approval.

KH mentioned that the Nordic multicenter trial on medical abortion, published this fall in the Lancet (Sunde Oppegaard et al) have received support from NFOG through the Fund.

Ganesh Acharya suggested that projects receiving major financial contributions from NFOG should publish their results in ACTA. This was discussed, but did not receive support of the Board.

6. Educational Committee Tomi Mikkola (TM) presents the plans for the next educational course to be held on May 7th-8th, 2015, in Copenhagen. The title of the course is "Nordic Ob Gyn training – are we good enough? The programme was decided upon at the EC meeting in Reykjavik. Three sessions are planned:

- * Training the trainers
- * Feedback given to the trainees
- * Assessment, i.e. examinations

There will be ample room for panel discussions, which turned out to be very successful at the previous educational meeting in 2013. It was suggested that accrediting could also be covered within the programme.

The budget was discussed. The last meeting had a registration fee of DKK 1500, covering both the stay and meals. There was a deficit of approximately DKK 160.000. The issue of finances for the May meeting was discussed under issue 8. It was concluded that the Board will accept a possible deficit also for the next course. EC have, however, not used its full budget for 2014, and have DKK 90.000 budgeted for 2015. In addition, there is within the budget for 2015 DKK 200.000 for the course. TM will suggest a reasonable registration fee after having concluded the budget for the meeting.

The course will be published on the NFOG website, and in the national bulletins.

7. Guidelines Committee KH presented the proposals suggested by the GC to the Board, after their meeting in October.

- * The GC will continue its work
- * The national guidelines in the Nordic countries, not older than 5 years, should be translated, possibly along with comments from the NFOG
- * It must be clarified whether the national societies are willing to do this
- * Possibly develop graded guidelines

These suggestions were discussed within the Board. There seems to be little interest for translating all of the national guidelines, as they are quite numerous, and will not all be of common interest. A minimum must be that the guidelines to be translated are considered relevant, and that all of the national societies have written guidelines on the issue. It was suggested that one should start by translating the table of contents for the national guidelines, and then identify chapters most suitable for translation. Another suggestion made was that important issues should be identified and put forward in an effort to form common consensus statements by NFOG.

The Board asks the GC to proceed and make recommendations to the Board.

8. Economy, budget and accounts Thea Lousen (TL) presented the NFOG budget and result for 2014-2016. The result for 2014 has not been completed, but it is very likely to keep within or below the budget for all posts, except for the Congress, which had a negative result of DKK 1.118.159 (the surplus of SEK 126 004 not added). The deficit is due to the Congress dinner, which is covered by NFOG.

In non-congress years, the main expenses, and income, are related to ACTA. TL informed that the expenses for the Chief Editor salary will increase from DKK 350 000 to DKK 600 000 in 2015, due to the overlap of the two Chief Editors. The Chief Editor expenses for 2015 are also expected to increase. There was a discussion on which model to choose for paying the associate editors. Two possible models were discussed: Fixed sum of 20 000 plus 450 pr

handled manuscript (model 1), or a fixed sum of 25 000 and 300/manuscript (model 2). The model considered most fair, and the model preferred by the Chief Editor is the one with lesser fixed sum. Most will then receive approximately DKK 30 000 annually, but those who handle many manuscripts will receive more. For 2014 model 1 is implemented, and the change to model 2 will have to occur gradually. NFOG is a tax-free organization, and cannot employ its Associate Editors.

TL further pointed out that the net finances for 2014 were above budget due to a higher income from the NFOG fortune than in the previous year. This cannot be expected in the coming years. The expenses created by the Board are well within the budget.

The budget for 2015 was presented. The Editorial Board of ACTA has proposed to engage Jens Langhoff-Roos (JLR) as Deputy Chief Editor. This will represent a 20% position, and the estimated cost is approximately DKK 210 000. This amount will be reimbursed to Rigshospitalet in Copenhagen. TL explained how this can be achieved within the existing budget. DKK 70 000 can be taken from the surplus of the post Expenses Ass Editors, DKK 50 000 from the post Reviews & Consultancy, and finally DKK 100 000 from AOGS development by CE. The Deputy CE will not have a budget for travelling, and has to share that with the CE. The possibility of increasing the number of Associate Editors from 14 to 16, as proposed by the CE, was also discussed. The need for an extra editor from Sweden was mentioned, in addition to an additional editor for statistical reviewing. That will, however, require an increase in expenses of DKK 70 000. The suggestion of engaging JLR as deputy CE **was accepted by the Board**. The need for two additional Ass Editors can be achieved through increased income for ACTA, which is within reach. The budget must however be kept, and the funding for two new Associate Editors is not in place, and the decision was postponed until we see the development of the finances during 2015.

TL concluded that the economy is sound despite the deficit from NFOG 2014. There may be a small surplus, in which case it will be forwarded to the NFOG Fund.

9. ACTA (AOGS) Reynir T. Geirsson (RTG) summarized his years as the Chief Editor (CE) of ACTA, starting in 2007. He is stepping down from January 1st, but will continue as CE emeritus until June 30th, 2015.

As CE, RTG has gradually implemented the necessary measures that makes ACTA the very good journal it is today. The implementation of more reviews/overviews and supplements, raised article standard, higher standard of English, editorial messages, an increased number of submissions, and an increased rejection rate are among the actions that have been taken. Further, the adding of associate editors, review editor, trainee editor, and international editors are important measures. International collaboration with organizations like COPE, WAME and EASE has been initiated, and RTG has sought to be present at some international meetings and congresses, making ACTA visible. The acronym AOGS has been internationally promoted, reducing the emphasis on the more local Scandinavian affiliation. Since the last Board meeting the impact factor has risen to 2.005, after steadily increasing under RTG as CE. Theme issues on fetal monitoring and fetal programming, press releases and commentaries have been published within the last 6 months. RTG has visited several of Finland's University clinics with the presentation "ACTA - not the last resort", in an attempt to increase submissions from Finland. He has continued to arrange courses on how to write and publish. A twitter site is now in place, as well as an app for iPad users. The aimed for rejection rate is 80-85%, and is presently 83.3%. ACTA receives 75-90 manuscripts/year, and will pass 1000 in 2014. The aim is to keep the number of published articles < 200, as this influences on the impact factor.

RTG raised the question of how to choose the associate editors in the future. Should the national societies decide? In Denmark the position is advertised. The issue should be

discussed before the next General Assembly in order to propose a change in the enactments of ACTA.

He further asked that the national societies should help in motivating their members to accept the request to review for ACTA. All associate editors use external reviewers, and rely on the cooperation of colleagues for reviewing.

Ganesh Acharya (GA) presented some of his visions for the future, before taking over as CE of ACTA/AOGS. GA will continue the effort to get Nordic academics to publish in ACTA, as well as good institutions outside the Nordic countries. The journal is promoted in several ways; through the quality of its content, its appearance, its service, its label value, and through advertisement/marketing. The promotion of the AGOS brand worldwide will continue, as will the work for improving the quality of submissions and increasing the impact factor. The number of non-citable articles must be reduced, and the aim to publish primary research, rather than secondary, will be pursued. Important for potential authors is high quality peer-review and editorial feed-back. Quick decision on acceptance, and rapid publication, visibility and impact are needed. GA and the Editorial Board will work to meet these requests. The ACTA Editorial Board will select a new International Editorial Board, where its members are expected to review at least 10 manuscripts/year. The marketing of ACTA must be aggressive, and international contacts be made. ACTA is today the 4th most significant journal in general obstetrics and gynaecology on an international basis. GA will further focus on improving peer-review, hold strategy meetings, evaluate editors, to mention some areas. Further, GA asks for ideas for future good reviews and supplements.

KH and TL informed of the renegotiation of the contract with Wiley, which then will be valid for another 5 years. The main issue of the new contract will be the increase in royalty as a consequence of the reduced number of printed issues. The Board has as its intent that in the next contract period the number of printed issues should be set at 300, and that the royalties to ACTA should be increased from 42% to 57%. **The Board decides** that the negotiation of the new contract with Wiley will be completed by KH and TL.

Further, **the Board decides** on the initiation of an ACTA poster prize of DKK 5000. There will annually be awarded one or more prizes by the respective national societies, within the total sum of DKK 5000 per national society per year. This will preferably be in association with their annual meetings. Not all of the societies have posters presented at their annual meeting, and it is up to the national societies to decide the form of the prize(s). It would be preferable if an associate editor from ACTA in the respective country is part of the jury. It was further **suggested by the Board** that both RTG and GA should be presented in the national bulletins.

10. NFYOG Anne Cathrine Hoffgaard Munk (ACHM) asked for the approval of the Board for a change in § 8 of the statutes of NFYOG. It presently states that changes in the statutes must be approved by the respective National Societies. **With the approval of the National Societies on the Board** this is changed to "Changing these statutes requires agreement from the NFOG Board".

ACHM further asked for the Board's approval for the NFYOG members to attend the EC course in May, even if it exceeds the budget. TL said that there will most likely be money left over from the 2014 budget, in addition to the DKK 140 000 that is budgeted for 2015. This will give room for the NFYOG members to attend the course in Copenhagen. ECHM further asked if the NFYOG members could attend an EBCOG course on training the trainees. TL made it clear that it will only be accepted if the expenses are held within the 2015 budget. NFYOG has started the preparations for the NFYOG dinner in association with the pre-congress course in Helsinki.

11. FIGO Seija Grénman (SG) informed the Board that the issues of a new voting system, and also the female representation, had been discussed at the Executive Board meeting in Tokyo. With regards to the voting system it was decided that the voting instructions should be sent to all FIGO member societies, with separate nomination forms, well ahead of the General Assembly. On the latter issue it was decided that at future elections the countries must publish the names of the candidates, and that way the gender will be known. At the FIGO Congress in Vancouver there will be two Nordic sessions, on "Heavy menstrual bleeding" and "Induced abortion", respectively. SG further informed about the previous enquiry from Sweden regarding the possibility of arranging an Ingemar Ingemarsson memorial seminar at the Congress. A slot in the programme is presently being held for this. In October SG received a request for possible financial support for this purpose from NFOG. The matter was discussed, and **the Board concluded** that it is positive to such a seminar being arranged, but that NFOG will not give financial support. SFOG will follow up on the matter with regard to informing the group taking the initiative for such a seminar of the decision of NFOG. SG commented on that none of the Nordic national societies had nominated candidates for "The FIGO Awards in Recognition of Women Obstetricians/Gynaecologists". Prof. Lesley Regan (LR), Vice President of Strategic Development at RCOG and the Chairman of the FIGO Committee on Women's Sexual and reproductive rights, had been invited to the Board meeting to demonstrate how the workshops are run. Unfortunately, she could not attend due to other obligations. It was discussed within the Board how it can support the important work done by LR and colleagues at RCOG, arranging workshops on human rights and women's health. Possible ways for NFOG to support could be to cover the cost of one participant running a workshop, or to find a Nordic colleague(s) willing to run the workshop together with LR and cover the cost. **The Board suggests** a formalization of a possible collaboration with RCOG. OH further suggested arranging a workshop at NFOG 2016, possibly as a plenary session. **It was decided** to advertise the possibility to attend the workshops and apply for a grant from the NFOG Fund. SG will find out when the next workshop is to be held, and RB will draft a letter for the website. FIGO officers will be elected at the General Assembly in Vancouver in 2016. The President of SGY has informed that SG will be suggested as a candidate for the position as Vice President of FIGO. The other Nordic Societies and **NFOG support** her candidacy. NFOG will send a letter (drafted by JR) together with her CV to countries that are considered to be favourable to her candidacy, and support for her candidacy will be sought at the next EBCOG meeting. It was suggested to develop a twitter account/face book page within NFOG for promotion. **It was suggested** by the Board that the Nordic countries should apply for a place at the FIGO Executive Board, and Iceland has previously not been represented. The Board decided to encourage the Icelandic Society to apply to FIGO before April of 2015. RB was suggested as a candidate.

12. EBCOG There will be a council meeting in November, where JR and KH will attend. Of interest on the agenda is a suggested change in the voting system, dividing Europe into regions based on number of members.

13. News from the National Societies Ragnheiður Bjarnadóttir (**FÍFK**) informed of an ongoing strike by the doctors in Iceland. The reason for the strike is low pay, and much overtime. Those who are specializing abroad are not returning to Iceland after specialisation due to the difficult working conditions, and all specialities are affected. This is of great concern for the Icelandic health system. After the financial crisis the view is that the health service has not been prioritized. Answering the question as to what the other Nordic

colleagues could do to help, it was suggested that information should be dealt with within the Nordic societies, and the information distributed.

Further, RB informed the Board of the Icelandic government's decision to allow surrogacy, as the first Nordic government. FÍFK has been asked for its view on the matter, and was in the hearing clearly against. FÍFK was still asked to give advice on how to handle a situation with surrogacy, and their advice has now been used by the government. The most important issue of which is that the surrogacy mother has the legal right over the baby until it is handed over to the adopting parents.

Harald Almström (SFOG) informed that there is an ongoing discussion on surrogacy also in Sweden. Further, he informed of the EU directive on CPD (continual professional development) that needs implementation in Sweden, as one of very few countries that still does not have this. SFOG is involved in developing such a plan.

SFOG is also involved in improving the registers regarding maternal care and fetal registration.

A network for multicenter clinical studies is developing in Sweden, and the aim is inter-Nordic collaboration. The model is the Dutch system.

Karen Reinhold Wøjdemann (DSOG) informed that the authorities finally have recommended induction of labour with misoprostol tablets regardless of the fact that the medication is still not approved. KRW took up the issue that NIPT is available as a part of screening procedure in the first trimester in Denmark, but not as a national programme. The tests are sent abroad on the patients/doctors initiative, and there are no resources for counselling.

DSOG is working with developing graded guidelines, following the Oxford system. There are presently 2 systems of guidelines in use in Denmark, and a discussion is ongoing regarding which system to implement.

DSOG will shortly have their annual meeting and among other things decide on whether the bulletin of the national society shall continue to be published on paper.

Seija Grénman, in the absence of Juha Räsänen, (SGY) informed that the work auditing the University hospitals in Finland has finished. The auditing, focusing on the evaluation of the quality of the specialist training, is done every 5 years. The aim is to better quality and homogenize the training in the different Institutions. The conclusion from the audit being that the training is improving.

Further, the Government is closing down the smaller delivery units with < 1000 births pr year. All delivery units must have, in addition to a gynaecologist, an anaesthesiologist, and a pediatrician on call no further than 30 minutes away.

Knut Hordnes, in the absence of Jone Trovik, (NGF) informed of the breakthrough project on cesarean section. It includes all delivery units in Norway, and evaluates the CS practice using different parameters. The aim being to critically evaluate the practice, including indications. KH further informed that the authorities are implementing guidelines without discussing or informing NGF of ongoing work. This was the case when it was decided that the "Trondheim model" of deciding gestational age will be the official version for the future. In Norway there has been an ongoing discussion between two different university hospitals on which method to use for years. NGF has recently completed its revision of the guidelines in obstetrics.

Further the law on biotechnology is under revision.

14. Letter of concern to Pakistan's President The letter to Pakistan's president has been through several revisions since the decision to write such a letter was made at the last Board meeting. The decision was based on the appeal of the Pakistani doctor Shershah Syed, who gave a very strong closing lecture at the NFOG 2014 Congress, regarding the very difficult situation for women in Pakistan. Concern has been raised that such a letter may endanger his life, but he is adamant that he wants it to be sent to both the President and other officials in

Pakistan. NFOG is therefore sending the letter, signed by its President and the Presidents of the national societies, to a wide range of officials in the different regions of Pakistan. The National Chairmen will try to create publicity on the fact that the letter has been sent. FIGO will also be informed, and the letter will be published in the national bulletins.

15. Offer of collaboration with EMAS KH presented the offer of collaboration by the European Menopause and Andropause Society. This has been discussed both within DSOG and SFOG, and both societies declined a special collaboration with EMAS. There are numerous organizations within the field of obstetrics and gynecology where collaboration could be possible, and **NFOG sees no reason for special collaboration with EMAS.**

16. NFOG 2016 Oskari Heikinheimo (OH) presented what has been done by the Helsinki LOC so far. The web page www.nfog2016.fi is in place. The Congress will be held in Finlandia Hall on June 12th to 15th. An organizing firm has been chosen for the Congress. LOC has met with the NFOG SC, and the forming of a scientific programme is in progress. The frame of the Congress was presented. It was suggested to have an NFOG session, lead by the NFOG President, where collaborative projects are presented and discussed. The preliminary programme of the pre-congress course was presented. The preliminary programme will be sent to the NFOG Board, and LOC is open for suggestions.

17. Discussion of the future strategy of the NFOG Board KH informed that he does not see the need for any major changes to the activity of the Board, as it is already working with the issues that are within the mandate of NFOG. Those being ACTA, the NFOG Congress, and the NFOG Fund. The Board should continue to support the important work of the EC, the SC and the GC. It should further seek to support multicenter collaborative studies within the Nordic countries. As has been mentioned under issue 5, the SC is asked to assist in the making of some guidelines for the allocation from the Board Initiatives. This will be further discussed at our next meeting. As the discussion of the future strategies was cut short due to lack of time, it will continue at the next Board meeting.

18. Coming Board meetings It was decided to hold the next Board meeting in association with the EC course in May of 2015. The Board meeting will start on Wednesday May 6th, at 17.00. It will continue on May 7th from 08-12, and a final session will be held on May 8th from 13.30-16.00.

There will be a need for an e-mail discussion within the Board after the SC has had its meeting in March, allocating grants from the NFOG Fund.

19. Other business As some of the Board members had left before the meeting was completed, it was suggested that the most important topics should be discussed at an early stage of the meeting.

Knut Hordnes
President NFOG

Tone Skeie-Jensen
Secretary General