

”A Century of Nordic Dermatological Congresses”

History

The Nordic Dermatology Association was founded in 1910 as Nordiska Dermatologiska Föreningen by Carl Rasch from Denmark, Kristian Grøn from Norway and Edvard Welander from Sweden. The aim has been to promote the scientific exchange between dermatologists and venereologists in the Nordic countries through meetings to be held every third year. It was decided that the members of the national societies would automatically be members of this Nordic association. The new members would be accepted at the General Assembly of the forthcoming Nordic congress. These primary aims and statutes have remained unchanged since its start, although, due to the two World Wars and other circumstances during the stormy 20th century, the congresses could not be held as often as suggested originally and so far 31 meetings have been organised with the help of sponsors and exhibitors. Along with the excellent scientific sessions, the organisers made efforts to put great social programmes for the participants and for the accompanying persons.

The yearly membership fee, being 30 SEK since 1986, has been transferred by national societies to the Nordic Dermatology Association. The membership fees are also used to organize the Nordic congresses and travel grants for residents and young specialists in dermatology as well as to support Forum for Nordic Dermatology, the official journal of the Nordic Dermatology Association. In addition, grants for short visits at different dermatologic departments to promote the Nordic exchange are to be applied for and the reports from the visits are published in the Forum for Nordic Dermatology. At the Nordic Congress in Gothenburg in 2001 it was decided that the official language should be English which has resulted in an increasing number of congress participants from countries outside the Nordic area ([Bylaws of the Nordic Dermatology Association](#)).

Cultivating the Nordic dermatologic tradition has never been in opposition to the exchange with the rest of the world. The two Secretary Generals of the Nordic Dermatologic Association: Carl Rasch, Copenhagen and Nils Thyresson, Stockholm were the hosts of the World Dermatologic Congresses in 1930 and in 1957, respectively. Copenhagen, Lapland, Gothenburg have also been hosting the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology in 1993, 2006 and 2010, respectively. Stockholm hosted a meeting of the European Society for Dermatological Research in 2001, Helsinki in 2010 and Copenhagen will host this event in 2014. Keeping the Nordic bounds alive is a way to strengthen the position of the Nordic Dermatology in Europe and in the world. The increased cooperation with the Baltic countries or maybe a common membership with the Baltic Dermatology Association may also be a way to enrich our region and increase the impact of it. Common research projects that are going on are another basis for further development of this cooperation.

Celebration of the century of Nordic Dermatological Congresses

In its yearbook of 1985, the Museum of medical History in Stockholm, published an article

to celebrate 75 years of the Nordic Dermatology Association. The development of dermatology and venereology; the new schools and centers of scientific research, leading persons and treatment programmes were described by representatives from all Nordic countries ([Dermatologiens udvikling i Norden gennem 75 år](#)).

Since 1985, eight Nordic congresses have taken place. The programmes have mirrored the achievements in other western countries as well as the panorama and the expression of skin diseases due to environmental and cultural factors in the Nordic countries. Many sessions focused on UV treatment of inflammatory skin diseases as well as on skin tumours which are frequent in fair-skinned people who love sun. An endemic occurrence of some organisms such as *Borrelia* has had an impact on the investigation and treatment of morphea. These special circumstances have resulted in a common therapeutic tradition in the Nordic countries. Or maybe the common tradition is partly due to the exchange of the experiences at the Nordic congresses? A comparable socio-economic health care system in the Nordic countries resulted in a similar organisation of the programmes for sexually transmitted diseases and less interest in cosmetic dermatology. In addition to the clinical sessions, many sessions and free communications have focused on new research techniques to refine diagnostics and to introduce new treatments of skin diseases.

To illustrate the development of dermatology in the Nordic countries for the last 25 years, we turned to the participants of Nordic Dermatology Congresses from 1986 to 2008 to share their experiences. Interviews with Nordic dermatologists concerning their careers, fields of interest, collaborations, opinions on the position of the Nordic dermatology in the international setting and memories from the Nordic congresses are published at [100-year Anniversary of the Nordic Dermatology Association](#). We thank cordially all contributors and hope that many more would like to share their experiences. The stories will be inserted in an alphabetical order. We wish you a pleasant reading.

The 32nd Nordic Dermatology Congress in Tampere

The present congress was the seventh Nordic Dermatology Congress organized by the Finnish Dermatological Society. It has been five years since the last congress in Reykjavik. The scenery of Iceland is difficult to match but the forests and lakes of Tampere were beautiful in the sun of August. Five years made no difference the old and new Nordic friends who found each other quickly. Just, as it was described in the 22 stories of Nordic dermatologists who participated in the collection of memories released at the congress to celebrate 100 years of NDA.

The keynote lecture, "Clinical challenges in percutaneous absorption," was held by prof Howard Maibach, the nestor of contact dermatitis. He called Nordic dermatology for an "epicentrum of international dermatology." He has certainly contributed to this development by offering education at his department in San Francisco to many Nordic dermatologists. Several of them talked at the congress. Finland called home her USA and Europe ambassadors. Jouni Uitto from Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia talked on "Personalized Medicine for Heritable Skin Diseases Diseases. Leena Bruckner Tuderman from Friburg Medical Center held a lecture "Skin fragility: novel approaches with exome sequencing and disease proteomics." Many sessions such as Cutaneous lymphoma, Contact dermatitis, Mast cells in dermatology, Atopic dermatitis and Gendermatoses demonstrated ongoing Nordic cooperations and a broad spectrum of current Finnish research. This is certainly evidence that good basic school education (one of the best schools in Europe) and

governmental money are necessary for successful research.

Several dermato-venereologists from Estonia and Latvia participated in the congress. Many voices were raised to broaden the cooperation with the Baltic Association of Dermatovenereologists which will be prepared by a special group. Harald Moi suggested changing of the name of Nordic Dermatology Association to Nordic Dermato-Venereology Association.

A panel discussion, "Nordic perspective in dermatology," was the final session of the programme. Sampsa Kauppi, the chairman of the Young Dermatologists in Finland, informed about plans for a joint meeting with the Young Dermatologists in Denmark after a session at "Young dermatologist's forum." He suggested also a common Nordic course for young Nordic dermatologists in Health economics after an inspiring lecture of Olle Larkö. The board of directors decided to create NDA-courses for residents and specialists going on rotation between Nordic university cities. An education committee, which is being organized, will also evaluate possible nordic CME programmes and common core curriculum for the future specialists.

The gala dinner was held at the music theatre Palatsi with a show of Elvis Presleys repertoire of 50's rock and roll through to the Las Vegas years. It was especially touching to see young dermatologists from the Nordic countries rocking together – should be a good rhythm for future cooperation.

We thank cordially the Finnish Dermatological Society and the sponsors for bringing Nordic dermatologists together and organizing this excellent congress setting start for the second century of Nordic Dermatology Congresses.

Petter Gjersvik, chairman of the Norwegian Society for Dermatology and Venereology, concluded that the Nordic Dermatology Societies need each other. He announced that the 33rd Nordic Dermatology Congress will be held in Trondheim in 2016.

But first - a focused course for residents. Please, suggest suitable themes for such courses as well as other activities you would like NDA to engage in.

Post-congress activities

Fuelled by the many suggestions for the future of Nordic Dermatology Association ([minutes of the General Assembly](#)), the New board of NDA ([NDA Board 2013–2016](#)) met at the Royal Library, den Sorte Diamant, in Copenhagen on a sunny day in November 27, 2013. Two main issues were discussed; the statutes of NDA and Education programmes. A committee including Petter Gjersvik, Robert Gniadecki and Olle Larkö was elected to evaluate and modernize the present statutes ([Bylaws](#)). Education, virtually the very essence and purpose of the Nordic Dermatology Association, was discussed in terms of yearly courses for residents and common meetings for specialists. Strategy, practical matters and organization of NDA courses were drawn up. Gregor Jemec, the president of NDA, is already organizing the first course ([NDA course on Skin Surgery](#)). In addition, it was suggested to hold a satellite symposium for residents 1 day before the Nordic Congress (first 2016). Tove Agner suggested common meetings for specialists, both earning of CME credits and for socialising. A Nordic pre-symposium meeting before the EADV meetings (like a

sister society) was discussed. These are the drafts – a wish list - to be hopefully realised in the years to come.

Summary of 2014 year activities

This year, in August, Robert Gniadecki, Gregor Jemec and John Paoli organized the first NDA course on Skin Surgery in Copenhagen. This two days hands-on course was very appreciated and will be repeated in February and August 2015. The NDA educational committee is planning other courses and if you have ideas for special themes, please contact the members of the committee (please see the list at [Courses](#)). The Statutes Committee including Petter Gjersvik, Robert Gniadecki and Olle Larkö, has proposed new Bylaws of the NDA. It will be sent to the national societies in January 2015, to be voted on at the General Assembly of NDA at the **33rd Nordic Congress of Dermatology and Venereology in Trondheim on April 27-29, 2016**. Please, make a note in your calendars! You will find continuously updated information about the congress at www.nordicderm2016.org. The board of NDA has nominated Olle Larkö as the Nordic candidate for the ILDS. Our warm congratulations!

Half year report on the 2015-year activities

The members of NDA educational committee met in Stockholm on the Valentine day in February. They reviewed the present structure of courses for residents in dermatology and venereology in the Nordic countries (see to the right "Summary of the educational courses during residency in the Nordic countries") and suggested a frame of future courses organized by NDA (see above under Courses). The third NDA course on Surgery took place in Copenhagen in February 2015 and was very appreciated. Next NDA course on Dermoscopy is scheduled to 2016, the place will be announced.

The statutes committee has suggested new Bylaws that were discussed at NDA board meeting in Copenhagen in May and accepted by the NDA board and the boards of the national societies (see to the right "New Bylaws"). The main change is that NDA – an organization of individual nordic dermatologists will become an association of the five Nordic societies of dermatology and venereology. The new statutes will be voted on at the General Assembly of the 33rd Nordic Congress of Dermatology and Venereology in Trondheim. The very interesting program of this congress is taking shape and you can follow it at www.nordicderm2016.org. NDA board has decided to increase the number of travel grants for residents from 25 to 35. Sending an abstract for the congress is mandatory so, please, start thinking of it already and make a note in your calendars of April 26th–29th, 2016!

Joanna Wallengren, MD, PhD
NDA Secretary General