

NFOG Board Meeting Minutes 2/2016 – part 1

Place: Hotel Crown Plaza and Finlandia Hall, Helsinki
Time: Saturday June 11th, 13.00-17.30, Sunday June 12th, 09.00-12.00
Present: Knut Hordnes (President), Thea Lousen (Treasurer), Tone Skeie-Jensen (Secretary General), Lotti Helström (SFOG), Seija Grénman (SGY and FIGO), Thomas Larsen (DSOG), Marit Lieng (NGF), Alexander Smárason (FÍFK), Ulrik Schiøler Kesmodel (Scientific Committee Chairman), Tomi Mikkola (Educational Committee Chairman), Niels Ulbjerg (Guidelines Committee Chairman), Peter Secher (Webmaster), Lars Ladfors (new Webmaster from after this meeting was present June 12th), Oskari Heikinheimo (President NFOG 2016), Karen Wøjdemann (former President DSOG)

1. Opening of the meeting Knut Hordnes (KH) opened the meeting, welcoming the attendees.

2. Approval of the agenda The agenda was approved.

3. Approval of the minutes from the last Board meeting The minutes were approved with the correction of the final result of 2015 amounting to DKK 556.887, and not the higher preliminary sum that was presented at the Board meeting in April. The correct final result was concluded on by the treasurer and the external auditor.

4. NFOG 2016 Oskari Heikinheimo (OH) informed the Board of the last minute details before the Congress. 850 delegates, of whom 100 were from the industry, were attending. 30 nationalities, from all continents, were represented. Attendance according to countries was as follows: Finland 335, Denmark 160, Sweden 110, Norway 106, Iceland 12, Estonia 30, to mention some.

The App with the congress program seemed to be functional, and personnel would be available at the registration-desk if help with downloading were needed.

OH raised the question of what extent the pre-congress courses should have at future congresses. The attendance in general was low, and the course on simulation had to be cancelled. The practical courses, however, were well attended. The extent of work reasonable to put into arranging these courses should be discussed before the next congress.

The exhibition area was sold out, with approximately 40 exhibitors. Many of the exhibitors were late in signing on. The NFOG Congress closes with a presentation on the Zika virus, and a press release had been made in addition to an invitation to a press conference with one of the speakers.

As a generous gesture for the Congress participants, the city of Helsinki had given the participants prepaid tickets for public transportation.

The Scientific Committee (SC) will be present at the poster sessions, and poster prizes will be selected from those chosen for oral poster presentations.

As for the economy, the Congress will most likely balance, maybe with a small surplus.

The Congress President will write a Congress report.

5. General Assembly 2016 The Board went through the agenda of the coming General Assembly (GA), making sure that everything was correctly prepared. At the GA in 2014 it was suggested that the amendments should be changed in order to fit the changing of the Congress to odd years, resulting in a three-year gap between congresses (issue 23 in the minutes from the GA of 2014). **The board discussed this and decided that there is no need for a change of the amendments**, as it will only have to be changed back to the original after the Congress. The congresses will continue to be held biannually, as is stated in the current amendments.

Further, the Board discussed the wording of the proposed change to the future use of the Board Initiatives" (DKK 250.000), aimed at enabling the Board to use its Inter-Nordic collaborative work at an international level. This issue will be presented at the GA under "Other business".

6. Budget and results Thea Lousen (TL) presented the budgets for the periods of 2014-2016, and 2017-2018, and the results for 2014 and 2015, later to be presented at the General Assembly. The result for 2014 had been presented in 2015. There was a positive result of 433.584, well above what was budgeted. The reason for this was the digitalization of AOGS.

As for 2015, the result for the post for the Chief Editor salary was well above the budget. The reason for this being mainly that the salary of DKK 225.000 for Assistant Chief Editor of AOGS was not in the budget. The income of AOGS was almost DKK 1.000.000 above the budget, mainly as a result of the supplement on progesterone. TL went through the posts that differed from what was budgeted, such as that the Educational Committee (EC) had exceeded their budget due to the visit to RCOG. Further, the expenses for FIGO was above the budget due to the decision to pay the travel expenses of the President of NFOG, in order for him to chair the Ingemar Ingemarsson symposium. The preliminary result for 2015 was presented at the previous Board meeting, and was expected to turn out at about one million DKK. Since then, the treasurer had been presented with extra expenditure, reducing the result of 2015 to DKK 556.887. This was still well above the budget of DKK -425.000.

The budgets for 2017 and 2018 were discussed. The proposed budgets will be presented at the General Assembly, asking for acceptance. The cost related to the Chief Editor will increase due to the introduction of an Assistant Chief Editor. The budget for editorial assistance is also increased, due to an increase in the salary of Susana Benedet, previously agreed on. The income of AOGS has been quite good after the change to online distribution, and the journal is economically in good balance. The budget for the EC is increased to DKK 150.000 in order to develop graded Nordic guidelines. The budget for FIGO is increased to DKK 100.000 in FIGO Congress years, in order to give Nordic speakers at the congress the possibility to apply for travel grants (see wording in the Minutes of the GA). In 2017 DKK 200.000 is budgeted for expenses relating to the upgrading of the website.

The fortune of NFOG is approximately DKK 10 million., and approximately DKK 4 million is placed in the Foundation.

The aim is to keep the budget of NFOG in balance. The budgets for 2017 and 2018 are DKK -385.000 and -215.000, respectively. With the exception of 2014, with the negative balance due to the NFOG dinner at the Stockholm Congress, the results have for the last

years been positive. That may also be the case for 2017 and 2018, but it is dependent on the income of NFOG.

7. News from the National Societies Marit Lieng (**NGF**) informed the Board of the ongoing work to change the Norwegian specialist training. NGF has participated in forming the new aims of the training programme, and giving advice on how to achieve these goals. The Health Authorities aim to reduce the time spent on specialisation, and NGF is afraid that the quality of the training will suffer.

Further, NGF has engaged against advertisements and practice of some plastic surgeons doing reconstructive vulvar surgery, questioning the ethics.

Work is also ongoing in planning the annual meeting of NGF in October.

Lotti Helström (**SFOG**) gave further information to the Board on the issue of legal abortion that was discussed at the last Board meeting. The limit for legal abortion in Sweden is 18 weeks, but may be granted at a later date after application. The limit the National Board of Health has set is 21+6, but the foetus may then be born in week 22+, and may be viable. A case of attempted resuscitation was reported in week 22+4, but the foetus died after 6 hours. The National Board of Health has decided that the abortion must be completed no later than week 21+6, and that the application must be submitted no later than week 21+3. There is an ongoing discussion on this issue, also within SFOG. If the foetus has malformations not compatible with life, there is no upper limit for abortion.

As has previously been reported from SFOG, the organization has taken on the great task of organizing courses needed for specialist training. The work is now completed, and the courses will be advertised in October.

SFOG is planning its annual meeting in August. The annual meeting with the professors and heads of departments will be held at the same time. Of particular interest is the issue of how to take care of the doctors that have migrated to Sweden, trying to utilize their competence.

Alexander Smárason (**FÍFK**) announced that the number of specialists in ObGyn in Iceland has reached 50. The inter-disciplinary scientific meeting with doctors and nurses in anaesthesiology and surgery, held in April, had been a success.

Further, he informed that Reynir Geirsson is heading a committee that has asked representatives for all specialities in Iceland for formal protocols for specialist training in their field. Until now, most of those planning to become a specialist in the field of ObGyn have had to go abroad. This will involve a great deal of work for FÍFK both in short and long term. The last issue from Iceland was that formal work has started revising the now 40-year-old law on legal abortion. FÍFK has written comments to the working group discussing who is best suited to make a decision on whether or not a woman should be allowed to have an abortion, the doctor or the patient? According to the comments, the doctor should advise the woman up to 22 weeks, but the woman should then make her own decision.

Seija Grénman (SG) (**SGY**) informed the Board of a health reform in slow progress. One of the aims of the reform is to define 3 levels of hospital care, with only a small number of hospitals having a complete service with advanced treatment. The surgical procedures will be centralised, such as cancer, advanced endometriosis, and difficult pelvic floor procedures. How to secure the training of surgical skills is subsequently an issue of discussion.

Further, the Health Authorities have estimated that the number of specialists needed by 2030 will be 5 % above what is currently available. This estimate is considered too low.

Finally, SG informed that it is increasingly difficult for doctors to find a job in Finland. The number of students admitted to the medical schools in Finland have increased, and as many as 600 students annually go abroad to study medicine. In addition, the number of hospitals having a delivery service will decrease, and as a consequence the need for doctors on duty will decrease. The number of private institutions is also decreasing. All in all the situation for newly trained specialists in Finland will be increasingly difficult. Thomas Larsen (**DSOG**) informed the Board of the newly held UN sponsored conference on reproduction and sexual rights of women, where DSOG attended. There were several international participants present to shed light on this important issue. In May, DSOG arranged its annual 3-day congress. Both the past and the present Presidents of FIGO were attending the meeting, emphasizing the important relationship between the Nordic countries and FIGO.

Further, the participation in the Danish HPV vaccination programme has plunged, most likely due to the negative focus on the possible side effects of the vaccine. At present, only about 30 % of those eligible for the programmed take the vaccine. DSOG is collaborating with the Health Authorities to improve the support for the programme. DSOG are consulted by the Health Authorities on a number of issues. Prenatal diagnostic tests are being considered both in week 12 and 19, with both ultrasound and blood-samples. The chance of discovering a malformation is around 1/300. The big question is how this should be financed. TL informed that the discussion on the use of Misoprostol is still running in Denmark. An evaluation and renewal of the specialist training is ongoing, Three levels of specialisation are planned over a 7-year period, and it needs to be decided on the level of competence that should be required at the different stages of training. Further, the Health Authorities want to reduce the number of Departments allowed to treat patients with disease related to gynecological cancer. A line needs to be drawn between the question of acceptable distance to place of treatment and the quality of the treatment given.

Finally, TL informed of the discussion ongoing regarding midwife-run clinics without doctors available. There is an interest for such clinics among midwives and some politicians. There are an increasing number of home-deliveries, and very few serious events take place at these deliveries. There are no clear limits as to what a midwife can do as opposed to a gynecologist, with regards to deliveries. TL raised the question of why there are more instrumental deliveries in hospitals as opposed to home-deliveries with the same patient population. The question of the increase in medicalisation related to deliveries in hospitals should be addressed.

8. Educational Committee (EC) As he is leaving the EC after four years, Tomi Mikkola (TM) was asked to give his view on the role of the EC. In his time as chairman of the EC, the focus has been on education, with emphasis on how to harmonize the ObGyn training within the Nordic countries. The two educational courses in this period have been dedicated to the same, with good discussions on the issue among the participants from the Nordic countries. He also pointed to the importance of strengthening the collaboration with NFYOG, and gave credit to Anne Cathrine Hoffgaard Munk for her great effort as leader of NFYOG. As for the next educational course he feels that the focus is moving away from the strict issue of education, and he warns against the biannual educational courses becoming biannual "mini-congresses".

TM pointed out that the NFOG Board must have a clear view on where it wants the EC to go, and what its role should be in the future. He encouraged a continuous discussion with the new EC Chairman Katrin Kristjánsdóttir. TM also challenges the Board on how

the future educational courses should be conducted. Which group of doctors are the courses aimed at, the trainees? He asked that the Board should give the EC a clear mandate.

As for harmonizing the Nordic training, this is not easily achieved, as the different countries have different systems for training. He mentioned as an example how Stockholm purchases the service of private gynecological centres, leaving much of the benign surgery to these institutions, which has consequences for the training. Issues not much discussed in his time as Chairman is subspecialisation and the further training of those who have finished their specialist training.

TM also stressed the importance of trying to harmonize the training with the other European countries. He asked that the best of the training programmes in the Nordic and in the other European countries should be used.

TM concluded by focusing on the unused potential within the EC. He encouraged the National Societies to discuss how they think the EC should develop and be used in the future.

9. "Unwritten" rules practiced within NFOG Thea Lousen has put on paper the practiced, but so far "unwritten", rules regarding the expenses of the NFOG Board, Committees, and Internal accountants.

Her suggestions were discussed within the Board and accepted as the established practice of the NFOG Board.

Board members do not receive any compensation for the duties performed while on the Board.

The location of the Board meetings (BM) change between the respective countries. The meeting venues are suggested by the National Presidents, and the decision is made by the Board. In order to reduce travel expenses BM are held in connection with the NFOG Congresses and courses. BM can be held in outside the Nordic countries if there is a honourable purpose (i.e. one Board has visited the Royal College in London). The expenses must be held within the budget.

When the BM are held at NFOG Courses or Congresses, the booking of rooms goes through a booking agency. The Congress President/Chairman of the Educational Committee are asked to arrange a special Board-link for the booking, and are requested to reserve meeting rooms for the Board. Board dinner is usually arranged by the Board member(s) residing in the city/country where the meeting takes place.

As for other meetings, the Presidents of the National Societies where the BM take place are responsible for the meetings; the booking of hotel rooms, meeting rooms, and arranging Board dinners. The Secretary General registers the names of the Board members attending the meeting, the need for single- or double-rooms, and time of arrival and departure.

Common transportation from the airport is favoured to reduce expenses.

Expenses for the BM must be within the budget for the Board. The expenses for the dinner and other social arrangements must be approved by the Treasurer. A Board dinner for 16-18 people is expected to cost between DKK 20.000-25.000.

Board members are asked to book non-refundable tickets, at the lowest possible price. If, for some reason, the flight has to be changed, NFOG will cover all expenses. It is generally not allowed to use a travel agency.

Similar rules apply for the NFOG Committees. The Committees are responsible for expenses being held within the budget. If the expenses are expected to exceed the budget, the Treasurer must be asked prior to the event, and accept the over expenditure.

The Board members can take part in the NFOG Congresses and educational courses free of charge.

Members of the Scientific Committee take part in the planning of the Congresses and attend the Congress free of charge.

Members of the Educational Committee attend the educational courses, but not the Congresses, free of charge. If the EC has a meeting in connection with a Congress, only expenses related to the meeting are covered by NFOG, not the Congress fee etc.

If the stay at BM, courses, or the NFOG Congresses is extended for personal reasons, the hotel room will only be paid for the duration of the meeting. Extra nights are allowed if necessary for flight connections, but must be confirmed by the Treasurer.

At all meetings board and committee members can choose to have a double room, and a partner may be accommodated. If a partner is accompanying, the partner will be invited to the Board dinners and other social events. Expenses for the partner related to transport, congress- or course fee, and social events at the congress will not be paid by NFOG.

In relation to the change of National Presidents and Chairmen of the NFOG Committees, the new President/Chairman is invited to attend a BM together with the departing leader. Expenses related to the BM are paid by NFOG. If the BM is held in relation to a course, the course fee is paid by NFOG. If the meeting is held in relation to a Congress, only expenses related to the BM are paid for both past and present President/Chairman. Congress fee, etc will only be paid for one of the two.

Expenses for handing over the post as NFOG President, Secretary General, and Treasurer are paid for by NFOG, and double attendance of more than one meeting may be necessary. Congress fee, etc is only paid for the Board members.

Congress fee and travel expenses are not paid for people running for election at the General Assembly (GA) to positions of trust within NFOG, unless they are already on the Board.

Election to such positions can be carried out in absentia.

As for the change of Webmaster, the question of reimbursement of expenses related to a Congress for both old and new webmasters, will be decided by the Treasurer. It will, in part, depend on the time the departing Webmaster has served on the Board.

The Internal Accountants (IA) must go through the accounts prior to the GA. The external accountant (Ildals) will prepare a report in English and make all accounts and invoices available for inspection. This can be done by e-mail, but the IA is at liberty to travel to Copenhagen for inspection. All expenses for travel, accommodation, and diet will then be covered by NFOG. One of the IA must attend the GA to present the auditors report. Expenses for attendance of the meeting are covered by NFOG if the IA is not otherwise attending the GA. In general, Congress fee is not paid for the IA.

The Treasurer will in due time contact the IA to make arrangements for the inspection. The Treasurer will assist the IA, but will not be present at the inspection unless the IA asks for this. The Secretary General will contact the IA to secure their attendance at the GA.

Editorial Board members will not have the expenses for an NFOG Congress or course covered by NFOG. Such expenses must be covered by the budget of AOGS.

10. Other business Niels Ulbjerg (NU) suggested for the Board the establishment of an NFOG textbook with an overview of the current curricula expected of the medical students to cover. From the discussion within the Board it became evident that there do already exist electronic textbooks in some of the Nordic countries. NU pointed out that it would be of interest to reveal the similarities and the differences between the curricula of the Nordic countries. The suggestion needs to be discussed within the Nordic Societies, and with the editors of the already existing National textbooks. The Chairmen

are asked to discuss with the National editors, and a meeting between NU and the editors was suggested. The cost can be covered within the budget by using the "Board reserve". The issue will need further discussion at a later Board meeting.

Knut Hordnes
President

Tone Skeie-Jensen
Secretary General