

Short report from Nordic Maternal Mortality Collaboration meeting Gothenburg 220509

A total of nine representatives from the national maternal mortality groups in all the nordic countries gathered on May 9 for the first IRL meeting in three years. The aim was to discuss the current work in our national groups and how to further develop the nordic collaboration.

We started the day with a general discussion about the organization of the obstetric care in our countries. Average size of delivery units varies from 557 births/unit (Iceland) up to 2634 (Denmark). Home birhts seem most common in Denmark with around 3% of all deliveries. Norway seems to be the country most challenged by far distances to hospital. And we all share a certain challenge to recruit staff for large and small units.

The maternal mortality groups are organized slightly different in the nordic countries in respect to size, geographic representation and also in working methods. Most countries find their cases by merging register data, but there is also voluntary reporting of cases from the hospitals. All but Finland do systematic national Audits on reported cases. Iceland has very few cases and currently there is only one member of the icelandic maternal mortality group.

The five nordic countries share a common data file of maternal mortality cases. Only direct and indirect cases have been included so far, but we decided on the meeting to include also coincidental cases from 2018 and later, in order to identify and high-light cases of domestic abuse and other cases of homicide. We also decided to include certain cases of late maternal mortality within one year from delivery/abortion, if the cause of death was obviously related to the pregnancy. Good news are that preeclampsia as a cause of death has almost disappeared during the last decade. Covid -19 has caused few maternal deaths in the nordic countries – three verified cases in Sweden so far and less in the other countries.

The group discussed and planned future scientific collaboration related to the common data file, and we also agreed on a suggested program for our session on the NFOG congress in Trondheim 2023.

Finally we discussed current and future collaboration with the NOSS group. In the majority of the nordic countries there are already strong connection between NOSS and the maternal mortality groups. The aim is to profit from this work to further reduce and prevent maternal morbidity and mortality in the nordic countries.