

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2013**

NOS-M is a cooperative body for the medical research councils in Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

The objective of NOS-M is to further develop the committee as a joint forum for promotion of medical research in the Nordic countries and to strengthen the international status of Nordic health research. Enhancement of Nordic cooperation has been of increasing importance in science policy issues; especially in relation to the European Research Area and the establishment of NordForsk, a platform for joint Nordic research and research policy development.

### **Composition of NOS-M**

#### *Member councils:*

Forskningsrådet för Hälsa, Finlands Akademi, Finland  
Rannsóknamiðstöð Íslands (RANNIS), Island  
Divisjon for Vitenskap, Norges Forskningsråd, Norge  
Ämnesrådet för medicin och hälsa, Vetenskapsrådet, Sverige  
Det Frie Forskningsråd | Sundhed og Sygdom, Danmark

Each member country is represented by 1-2 council members and 1-2 administrative representatives. Observers from the Nordic Council of Ministers as well as NordForsk are invited, and as of 2005, observers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania may take part in NOS-M meetings and activities. The Nordic members of Science Europe Medical Sciences Committee were invited to join the meetings in 2013. Additional observers may be invited.

NordForsk has hosted the NOS-M secretariat from 1 January 2013.

#### *Members:*

Finland: Tuula Tamminen (Chair), Pauli Puolakkainen  
Iceland: Jona Freysdóttir  
Norway: Stig Slørdahl, Anne Husebekk  
Sweden: Mats Ulfendahl, Birgitta Öberg  
Denmark: Jørgen Frøkiær, Lars Køber

#### *Administrative representatives:*

Finland: Jarmo Wahlfors, Merja Kärkkäinen  
Iceland: Guðlaug Þ Kristjánsdóttir  
Norway: Hilde Jerkø, Henrietta Blankson  
Sweden: Teresa Ottinger  
Denmark: Charlotte Deleuran Nielsen

#### *Observers:*

Nordic Council of Ministers: no representative appointed  
NordForsk: Maria Nilsson  
Latvia: Iveta Ozolanta  
Estonia: Irja Lutsar  
Lithuania: Limas Kupcinskas

#### *NOS-M Secretariat:*

NordForsk/Maria Nilsson

### **Main activities during 2013**

NOS-M has had two meetings during 2013:

- Copenhagen 7-8 March
- Longyearbyen 9-11 September

Below are listed the different topics NOS-M has discussed during the 2013 meetings.

#### *Country reports*

Country reports from each Nordic national research council are given at each NOS-M meeting. These reports are important in the mutual information exchange between the councils and also prominent in the feedback to the individual research councils.

#### *Themes*

One topic of special interest is brought forward at each meeting. The special themes in 2013 were:

##### *1) The future role of NOS-M in a changing landscape*

Due to recent developments on mainly the European arena, the future role of NOS-M was discussed. The discussion focused on future role and activities of NOS-M in terms of strategic work on the international arena, funding and structure of NOS-M meetings. NOS-M acknowledged the advantage of having good international contacts. It was therefore decided to invite the Nordic SE-MED members to the NOS-M meetings. The role of NordForsk and possible collaboration possibilities were also discussed.

##### *2) Quality assessment of research projects*

The topic includes a strong focus on gender equality. The report "Observations on gender equality in a selection of the Swedish Research Council's evaluation panels" from the Swedish Research Council served as background material for the discussion. Each country shared information regarding quality assessment of research projects including definition of merits and scientific independence.

In general, gender equality is an important and challenging topic for all Nordic countries. Figures on the level of female applicants and success rates divided on academic career level were presented and discussed.

It was discussed how NOS-M could influence that the faculties and university take on their responsibility in these issues. Gender equality was identified as an important topic for the White Paper.

#### *Excursions*

Site visit to the University Centre in Svalbard and Longyearbyen Sykehus at the NOS-M 2/2013 meeting.

#### *Harmonisation of the medical PhD education*

NOS-M has initiated a pilot on harmonisation of the Nordic PhD education. Today the requirements for the medical PhD education are quite different, but we do regard them as equal when evaluating the competence of Nordic researchers. Similar requirements in the Nordic countries could enhance Nordic collaboration in evaluating PhD degrees, but also increase the quality of the PhD degrees.

A working group, consisting of one representative from each of the Nordic countries, has agreed on several recommendations for a possible harmonisation of the Nordic medical PhD education. NOS-M has endorsed the recommendations and has approached the

medical faculties and the health schools for consultation of the recommendations. The recommendations have been updated with the feedback received from the countries. NOS-M will discuss how to continue the pilot at the NOS-M 1/2014 meeting.

#### *White Paper on Medical Research*

Autumn 2013, an update of the White paper on Medical Research "Present Status and Future Potential for Medical Research in the Nordic Countries" (2011) was initiated by NOS-M. Science Adviser Sara Illman at the Academy of Finland is coordinating the update process.

The new version should focus on Nordic added value in medical research cooperation. The White Paper should focus on areas suitable and important for Nordic cooperation but also for cooperation with Europe. The figures should display joint information from the Nordic countries in addition to the national information. The new version should be finalized autumn 2014.

#### *Nordic Trial Alliance*

Clinical trials has decreased in all Nordic countries the last decade, both industrial and academically initiated. A critical resource to halt and turn this negative development is open access to research infrastructures connecting research communities sharing competences and resources. To halt and turn the present development, a Nordic clinical research network – Nordic Trial Alliance (NTA) - has recently been initiated by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The initiative is associated with the Nordic Council of Ministers' programme on Sustainable Nordic Welfare ([Hållbar Nordisk Valfärd](#)). NTA was officially started 1 April 2013. NordForsk will host the NTA secretariat during a three-year pilot period.

In January 2013, NTA arranged its first stakeholder workshop which was funded by NOS-M. The NTA board was appointed autumn 2013. At its first meeting, the board decided to support five Nordic network projects. A pilot call for Nordic clinical research projects opened in the end of 2013.

#### *Joint Committee Secretariat*

Responsibility for the Joint Committee secretariat has historically rotated among the Nordic countries at three-year intervals. In order to secure the continuity of the NOS-M secretariat and to strengthen the link between NOS-M and NordForsk, the secretariat was permanently transferred to NordForsk as of 1 January 2013.

The chairmanship will still rotate among the member countries in the following order: Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland.

#### *Other topics*

- Information from NordForsk and the Nordic Council of Ministers
- Information about activities in ESF/EMRC/Science Europe
- Information from the Baltic countries

#### Financial report

NordForsk has administered the finances of NOS-M during 2013. A financial report is attached to the annual report.

*/Maria Nilsson, NordForsk  
March 2014*