

Swedish Forum for Young Dermato-Venereologists

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The Swedish Forum for Young Dermato-Venereologists was founded in 1998; this year we are celebrating our 10th anniversary.

Ten years ago the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare drastically reduced the number of courses available to residents in dermato-venereology, leading to the need to organize meetings for dermato-venereologists in training. In 1998, I was invited to represent my fellow residents at the Swedish Association of Dermato-Venereology. I soon realized that it was impossible to represent a group of colleagues whom I had never met, or had met only on the few occasions when some of us were lucky enough to attend national courses organized by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare. In addition, discussion about future needs was hampered by the fact that the total number of dermato-venereology residents in Sweden was unknown. Thus, in order to meet my colleagues and to determine the number of dermato-venereologists in training, I contacted the heads of all the dermatology departments in Sweden and wrote to all of my colleagues.

The aims of setting up an annual meeting were: firstly, to invite experienced Swedish lecturers to present topics not traditionally covered by the national courses organized by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare; secondly, to create a forum for the discussion of working conditions for residents; and thirdly, to enable the President of the Swedish Association of Dermato-Venereology to meet with younger colleagues and discuss the important issues of working life and the quality of dermatology and venereology training in Sweden.

Over the years the meetings have covered a wide range of topics in dermatology and venereology and have created a network of young colleagues, resulting in a friendly atmosphere. The number of attendants each year has varied from 40 to 55 residents. Topics covered include: advanced acne treatment; tropical dermatology; paediatric dermatology; diagnostic aspects of melanoma and dysplastic naevi; endocrinological problems in dermatology; updates in HIV; genital dermatoses;

biological drugs and their use in dermatology and venereology; and hair and nail diseases. The various dermatological treatment modalities and traditions used in different clinics in Sweden have also been discussed. A further important topic that we return to every year is that of leadership for doctors, which is a particularly informative discussion for me, due to my involvement in the work of the Swedish Medical Union and three associations within this organization.

Two pharmaceutical companies, initially both Roche and Schering-Plough, and latterly Schering-Plough Corporation alone, have provided essential financial support to make the annual meetings possible. The courses are all board-certified by the Institute for Professional Education for Swedish Doctors (IPULS), thus guaranteeing a high educational level and a nationally accepted sponsoring agreement.

At each meeting two residents are elected to represent at the Swedish Society of Dermato-Venereology. The most recent representatives are Linda Ternstedt (Fig. 1), from Västerås, and Anne Wetter, from Stockholm.



Fig. 1. Linda Ternstedt.

This year's meeting will be held at the end of September, and will cover the following topics: diagnostic pitfalls in dysplastic naevi and melanoma; dermoscopy of pigmented lesions; pathology of pigmented lesions; hormonal influence on melanomas; sentinel node diagnostics; and ongoing melanoma studies. Information about the meeting is available through www.ipuls.se, www.pdf.nu, will be published in Forum for Nordic Dermato-Venereology's May issue and will also be sent to the heads of all dermatology departments.

On behalf of the Swedish Young Dermato-Venereologists, I look forward to welcoming you to the meeting.