

Swedish Forum for Young Dermato-Venereologists: An Update

MARGARETA LIRVALL

PhD, Consultant Dermatologist, Consultant Pathologist. E-mail: margareta.lirvall@lthalland.se

The Swedish Forum for Young Dermato-Venereologists held their 10th annual meeting at Hotel Skansen in Båstad, Sweden on September 29–30, 2008. Forty-five residents in dermatology met to discuss dermoscopy under the experienced technical guidance of Dr Christian Ingvar, a surgeon from Lund and co-writer of an atlas of dermoscopy.

Dermoscopy, which is now widely used in dermatology clinics, is of utmost importance in diagnosing benign and malignant pigmented and non-pigmented skin lesions. It is well-known that, in the hands of an experienced doctor, dermoscopy increases diagnostic accuracy in skin lesions in about 15% of cases. This increase in accuracy has been shown to be due to recognizing certain acknowledged criteria, but, of course, these criteria first have to be taught in order to be recognized.

The meeting also focused on various pitfalls in diagnosing and surgically removing malignant melanoma. I work as both a dermatologist and a general pathologist in the south-west of Sweden, where the incidence and prevalence of melanoma is the highest, and this provided insight into the problems in recognizing and diagnosing melanoma.

As usual the meeting also included a presentation and information provided by the Chairman of the Society of Dermatology and Venereology (SSDV), Dr Magnus Bruze, and Dr Filippa Nyberg, the educational representative from SSDV.

Various practical issues of being a resident in dermatology and venereology were discussed. The problem of far too few courses being organized by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare was raised, along with other important medico-legal issues.

Drs Linda Ternstedt and Anne Wetter, formerly elected representatives of the Swedish Young Forum for Dermato-Venereologists, presented and discussed a survey on levels of salary, research opportunities and tutoring for residents at different levels of their hospital training.

A highly interesting and focused lecture on leadership was given by Dr Åsa Hallgärde on her personal experience of working as a chair of the department of infectious diseases at Lund University Hospital.

Having organized annual educational meetings for young dermato-venereologists in Sweden for a decade, I feel that it is now time for me to move on to other tasks in education and medicine. Over the last 10 years I have had the privilege of meeting almost all residents in dermatology in Sweden,

which has provided me with a broad network of great colleagues and good friends.

Over the years the meetings have been a superb opportunity to hear many excellent speakers and well-renowned consultants in dermatology giving lectures on a wide variety of topics; topics that are important and not covered by the courses traditionally given by the Swedish Board of Health and Welfare.

One of the most important aspects of the annual educational meetings has been to provide an opportunity to broaden a network of young colleagues in Sweden and to enable them to discuss important issues in medical career-making in pleasant surroundings and a friendly atmosphere.

The next meeting will be organized by Drs Linda Ternstedt and Anne Wetter, both energetic and fantastic young dermato-venereologists who have already shown great interest in improving the educational level and formal and non-formal contacts between colleagues.

I hope that the annual educational meetings will continue to be the highlight of the year and a meeting point in beautiful surroundings with colleagues, and that it will encourage professional and non-professional contacts for all dermato-venereologists in Sweden. I also hope that this forum for colleagues and good friends will eventually be broadened to enclose a Scandinavian meeting point for all residents in dermatology and venereology. I wish all young dermato-venereologists lots of fun in the future.

