

Dermatological Research: How to Get Started

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The author reports from the 2nd annual meeting for Norwegian researchers in dermatology, held in January 2009. It was an excellent opportunity to discuss common problems and exchange ideas.

The 2nd annual meeting on dermatological science in Norway was held at Radisson SAS Airport Hotel at Gardermoen outside Oslo on 15 January 2009. The meeting was arranged by the Norwegian Dermatological Society (NDS) through its scientific committee Forskningsforum (FOFO), which was established in 2008.

Twenty-eight participants, representing all of the university departments of dermatology in Norway, gathered to share information and gain inspiration. The focus of this year's meeting was how to start a research project; a common challenge for many dermatologists.

How to get started?

Dr Sameline Grimsgaard, an epidemiologist from the Center for Clinical Research at the University of Tromsø, gave the first lecture. She addressed several issues of importance to dermatologists with academic aspirations. Basic questions, such as "What is research?", "Why do research?", "What is a PhD?", and "What is a good research project?", were discussed. Important prerequisites for a research project are a good scientific hypothesis, an ability to discuss the hypothesis with others, competent surroundings, sufficient resources, good infrastructure and coaching, money, time, and a supportive leadership.

Grimsgaard also presented a thorough review on how to write a research protocol and what a project description should contain. She also gave advice on how to apply for funds. Common reasons for rejection are small data-sets, an untestable hypothesis, undefined end-points, poor literature studies, too many technical detail, lack of coherence in project description, and poor statistical power analysis. However, rejection must be seen as "part of the game", and several application rounds are common for many researchers.

The regional ethics committee: friend or enemy?

Ingrid Middelthun Moe, from one of Norway's four regional ethics committees for medical research, presented a short historical overview of medical research ethics and gave advice on how to apply for approval from the regional ethics committee.

Many researchers find the application for approval from the regional ethics committee a bureaucratic obstacle. Such approval has been compulsory for most types of medical studies since 1975. For some studies approvals are also required from the Norwegian Directory of Health (Helsedirektoratet), the Data Inspectorate (Datatilsynet), the Ministry of Health (Helse- og omsorgsdepartementet) and the Norwegian Medicines Agency (Legemiddelverket). From 2009 new health



Fig. 1. Members of the scientific committee of the Norwegian Dermatological Society: (from left) Kjersti Danielsen, Per Helsing, Ingeborg Bachmann, and Brita Pukstad.



Fig. 2. The three speakers at the meeting at Gardermoen: (from left) Sameline Grimsgaard, Daniel de la Rosa Carrillo, and Ingrid Middelthun Moe.

legislation will make the application and approval process easier. From March 2009 much of the application process will be web-based.

A complete application should contain a detailed project description, with relevant scientific and ethical considerations. It must also include the study protocol, information on how to recruit patients, how to provide patient information and obtaining patient consent. Information on economic interests must always be included.

My project, my frustrations

An important function of these meetings is to provide an arena for the presentation of ongoing and future research projects.

This year, *Dr Daniel de la Rosa Carrillo*, from the Department of Dermatology, Rikshospitalet University Hospital, Oslo, gave an exciting glimpse into the world of proteomics. The goal of his project, "Screening for therapeutic targets in psoriasis by high affinity proteomics" is to identify factors in the psoriatic cell cycle that may be targets for treatment.

A clinician carrying out laboratory research may often feel isolated from his or her clinical colleagues. Dr de la Rosa recommended joining a research group and carrying out research full-time for a period of weeks or months instead of 2–3 days a week.

The meeting was a success, and planning for next year's meeting has already begun.

Congresses and meetings

Årsmöte SSDV 27–29 maj 2009 i Eskilstuna. Inf: www.pdf.nu

2nd World Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Conference 2009 "Psoriasis - Skin and Beyond" on **June 24–28, 2009** in Stockholm, Sweden. Inf: <http://www.ifpa-psyo.org/t1.aspx>

10th Contact Dermatitis Conference on **July 9–11, 2009** in Hershey, USA. Inf: Penn State Hershey College of Medicine, MC G220, 44 East Granada Avenue, Room 1108, P.O. Box 851, Hershey, PA 17033 USA. ContinuingEd@hmc.psu.edu

39th Annual ESDR Meeting, **September 9–12, 2009** in Budapest, Hungary. Inf: www.motesz.hu/docs/ESDR2009.pdf

39th Annual Meeting of the European Society for Dermatological Research (ESDR) on **September 10–12, 2009** in Budapest, Hungary. Inf: ESDR Secretariat: Phone: +41-22-321-4890. Fax: +41-22-321-4892. www.esdr.org

8th Congress of the Baltic Association of Dermatovenereologists on **September 17–19, 2009** in Vilnius, Lithuania. www.badv2009.com

13th Congress of the European Society for Dermatology and Psychiatry (ESDaP) on **September 17–22, 2009** in Venice, Italy. Inf: www.esdap2009.org

18th EADV Congress on **October 7–11, 2009** in Berlin, Germany. www.eadv.org

5th International Workshop for the Study of Itch on **October 25–28, 2009** in Tokyo, Japan. Inf: Department of Dermatology, Urayasu Hospital, Juntendo University School of Medicine, 2-1-1 Tomioka, Urayasu, Chiba, 279-0021, Japan. ysuga@med.juntendo.ac.jp

11th World Congress on Pediatric Dermatology on **November 17–20, 2009** in Bangkok, Thailand. Inf: Iris Mundigl. Tel: +41-229 080 488. Fax: +41-227 322 850. wcpd@kenes.com

68th Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Dermatology on **February 26–March 2, 2010** in Miami, USA. Inf: American Academy of Dermatology Tel: +202-842-3555. Fax: +202-842-4355. www.aad.org

6th World Congress for Hair Research on **June 16–19, 2010** in Cairns, Australia. Inf: ICMS Pty Ltd, 84 Queensbridge Street, Southbank, Victoria 3006, Australia. Tel: +61-39682 0244. Fax: +61-39682 0288. hair2010@icms.com.au

40th Annual Meeting of the European Society for Dermatological Research (ESDR) on **September 9–11, 2010** in Helsinki, Finland. Inf: www.esdr.org

19th EADV Congress on **October 5–10, 2010** in Gothenburg, Sweden. Inf: olle.larko@derm.gu.se

Courses

Fördjupningskurs, dermatologi 9–10 juni, 2009, Halmstad, arrangerad av Wyeth Academy. Info: www.wyethacademy.se

Training Course Psychodermatology on **July 13–17, 2009**, in Brussels, Belgium. Info: www.eadv.org/article.asp?AID=274

Summer School Microbiology on **July 20–24, 2009** in Vienna, Austria. Info: www.eadv.org/article.asp?AID=274

Terapiinriktad fortbildningskurs för dermatologer 15–16 oktober 2009, Lejonadal, arrangerad av Schering-Ploug. Info: susanna.helgo@spcorp.com