

The Nordic Countries and the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV)

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Jon Olafsson who is very involved with EADV will with this paper encourage each of you to join this organization. Read below about the benefit as he sees it.

Does it make sense for us to join the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV)? Those who know that I am deeply involved with the EADV may smile and say that I am not exactly neutral in my presentation of the organization. The truth is that membership is beneficial for individuals, and I believe it is also beneficial for Nordic countries.

History of the EADV

The European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) was founded in 1958 in order to promote free movement of specialists between the European countries and to ensure the highest level of medical care in Europe. The UEMS represents national associations of specialists in the European Union (EU) and associated countries. The need to harmonize education in Europe was therefore becoming important. The idea of founding the EADV came, in 1983, from Hans W. Rothenborg and Lars Henriksen, the Danish delegation to the UEMS. The idea was partly to ensure high-quality education for all European dermatovenereologists. The two Danish colleagues were therefore among the 21 founding members of the EADV in 1987.

Nordic involvement in the EADV

Hans W. Rothenborg, who I am proud to say is my friend, was the first Secretary General of the EADV. He also served as EADV president in 1992–1994 and congress president of the only EADV congress held in the Nordic countries so far, in Copenhagen in 1993. In 2006 the spring symposium was held in Saariselka, Finland with the symposium chairman Raimo Suhonen. In 2010 the EADV congress will be held in Göteborg, Sweden, with the congress president Olle Larkö. Each Nordic country has representation on the EADV board according to the number of members. One board member represents each country, providing the country has at least 20 EADV voting members, or 25% of the national members are EADV members in the small countries. The only country with more than 100 members is Denmark. This is a crucial number, as it entitles the country to have 2 board members rather than one. It would be very significant to have 2 board members from other Nordic countries, for example from the country that hosts the congress. Currently the EADV board



Fig. 1. Former treasurer of EADV Jacques Housset together with the author.

has 40 members, and the Executive Committee has 8 members, of whom 2 are from the Nordic countries. One is Gregor Jemec from Denmark, who is a board representative to the Executive Committee, and the other is myself, as treasurer of the EADV from 2005, with my term ending in 2011. Other Nordic colleagues have served the EADV. We have had, and do still have, many excellent Nordic board representatives, committee members and chairpersons. Presently, the only Nordic dermatologist who is an EADV committee chairperson is Jørgen Rønnevig from Norway, who is chair of the Finance Committee. Gregor Jemec has been editor of the EADV news since 2004. It is thus evident that the EADV and the Nordic countries have been, and still are, closely connected.

Benefits of EADV membership

1. *Meetings.* EADV meetings are now considered by many to be among the best meetings in our speciality. The registration fee for the annual congress in Berlin in 2009 is 720€ for non-EADV members and only 400€ for EADV members. The annual membership fee for dermatovenereologists is currently 150€. Thus, even if you only go to the congress every other year and do not use any of the other membership benefits, you will still save money. The spring meetings also have the same lower registration fee for members.

2. *Printed material.* EADV members are provided with a subscription to the Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology & Venereology (JEADV). JEADV is among the fastest growing dermatological journals in the world. The impact factor of the JEADV has now jumped to 2.2 despite an increase in issues from 6 to 12 per year (a level of increase that would usually have a negative effect on the impact factor). The EADV Newsletter provides very informative and colourful reading. It includes a regular update on EADV activities and opportunities. EADV members will soon be able easily to access patient information material about skin diseases published in the main European languages. This is very useful as, although members may have their own patient information material, many patients do not understand the Nordic languages.
3. *Electronic access.* Members are given access to the member area of the EADV website (<http://www.eadv.org>), which provides, amongst other things, access to the Membership Directory. They will also have access online to the JEADV and the Newsletter, and to a Virtual Library of approximately 900 major medical journals. Many members will have access to journals at their hospitals, but through the EADV this information is accessible online anywhere. "Continued Medical Education"(CME), and "Continued Professional Development"(CPD), being the modern equivalent of CME, is becoming more and more important for all specialists. Members will also be able to access CME-CPD online.
4. *Resident's training programme.* The EADV Fostering programme is a high-quality, theoretical and practical training programme for residents in dermatology, which is intended for all residents. For those who do not have access to this kind of education, the fostering programme has been shown to be especially valuable.
5. *Visits to Centres of Excellence.* The EADV has recently begun offering dermatovenereologists, mainly those in private practice, the opportunity to spend a week at a Centre of Excellence in Europe, with the aim of learning new techniques, keeping up to date on diagnosis/treatment methods and learning how to organize a clinical service. Another new opportunity at the Berlin congress on 7–11 October 2009 will be for some members to visit a private practice; it is very educational to see how colleagues in other countries organize their offices.
6. *Scholarships.* Hundreds of scholarships are given each year. Many are intended for doctors from the less prosperous areas of Europe and other areas of the world. Most of these scholarships are around 1000€ and they are intended to help these doctors to attend the meetings. The EADV also supports educational projects in other continents.

The political importance of EADV

Of the 20,000–30,000 dermatologists in Europe, only 3,000 are members of the EADV. This clearly leaves room for growth. The EADV recently introduced the opportunity for national societies in Europe to become "supportive members". The individual members of such societies will not automatically become EADV members, thus the benefits mentioned above will not apply to individual national society members, although they will get some minor economic benefit. Therefore, even if your own society becomes a member you should also join as an individual member. The political impact of a large and powerful EADV will be very valuable for all European dermatovenereologists. Some politicians in Europe appear to be trying to introduce other healthcare professionals as able to carry out some aspects of what dermatovenereologists have traditionally been trained to do, claiming that this will be more economic. However, we know better; we must continue to show that the specialists in dermatovenereology have the best education and are best qualified to carry out this work. Our Swedish colleagues have recently demonstrated that dermatovenereologists are best qualified to diagnose skin cancers. This comes as no surprise to us; however, these things have to be shown scientifically, as our Swedish colleagues did. The EADV is the only European organization that can carry our flag in the broad political arena of Europe.

The American Academy of Dermatology

For the last 4 years the EADV and the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) have had a very fruitful liaison. It must be admitted that the EADV has gained the most from this cooperation as the EADV is "young" compared with the AAD. The EADV will, however, never be quite like the AAD, as Europe is neither as unified nor as uniform as the USA. The many different languages in Europe could be one of the main causes of this. Another difference is that the European national societies, which are more like the AAD, carry the heavy burden of negotiating with the authorities and social insurance systems. The EADV will never be directly involved or responsible for these aspects, but it could, if needed, provide support in many ways. Most importantly, however, it would be on a European scale, possibly in association with other dermatological organizations.

EADV and the Nordic dermatologist

Some of you will be members of many dermatovenereological organizations, but if you had to choose one international organization to join, you would do well to choose the EADV. Nordic dermatologists should aim to have more than 100 EADV specialist members from each of the 4 large Nordic countries. The least populated Nordic country already has 75% of its dermatologists as EADV members. Should this aim become a reality the Nordic countries would have 9 EADV board members, rather than the current 5; and this would strengthen our voice within the EADV.