

# Editorial

## Venereal Diseases and Present Risks

This November 2002 issue of *Forum for Nordic Dermato-Venereology* is devoted to venereology, as was the August 1998 issue.

In the 1998 issue, sexually transmitted diseases in Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, and in Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union were described and discussed in separate papers. In addition, Børge B. Jørgensen gave an extensive review of syphilis in Denmark from 1877-1997, based on systematic data from the Syphilis Laboratory at Statens Serum Institut, and demonstrated how dependent syphilis incidences are on the socio-economic environment, as very clearly illustrated from experiences during both world wars. In the same issue, fresh WHO epidemiologic data documented the rising STD trend in the East European countries.

In the present issue, A. Rubins and co-authors describe syphilis in Latvia, with decreasing numbers of

new cases of particularly congenital syphilis ever since 1998, even if neuro-lues may be increasing. Thus, direct STD exposure from the East may have peaked or stabilised. However, burdens of poverty and war and poor access to medical treatment in the former Soviet Union still exist, and in accordance with the knowledge presented in the review by Børge B. Jørgensen, it is likely that the risk on the eastern continent remains.

K. Edgardh outlines, against the background of increasing figures for chlamydia infections and a recent gonorrhoea outbreak in Sweden, a frightening perspective for STD in that country related to a more complex change of attitude and behaviour in the modern society under pressure, and not directly related to a war situation or special import from the outside. Under the influence of economic recession we may soon have a situation which in terms of STD risk has the uncertainties and underlying conditions of wartime.

The general conclusion is thus that the Nordic countries are presently facing a risky situation regarding STD both from the outside and from the inside, and an increased awareness and strengthening of venereology is highly appropriate. It would be relevant for example if the Scandinavian Society of Genito-urinary Medicine would establish a task force assigned to analyse and find solutions to the problems on the basis of updated epidemiological data from the Nordic region.

With this issue the *Forum for Nordic Dermato-Venereology* introduces our new special editor for venereology, Professor Harald Moi of the Olafia Kliniken in Oslo, Norway. Welcome, Harald Moi, from all of us at the journal!

**Jørgen Serup**  
Editor-in-Chief