

N F Y O G

Nordic Federation of Young Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR OBSTETRICS?



A SEMINAR ON THE CHALLENGES FACING OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS IN SCANDINAVIA

Copenhagen, Denmark

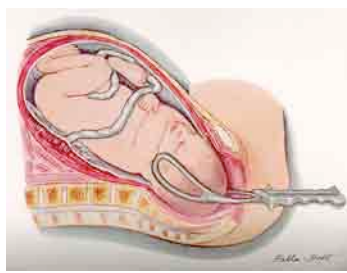
1st - 2nd June 2007

The Seminar

A two day course focusing on the challenges ahead for specialists in obstetrics and gynaecology in the Nordic countries.

Background

In February 2006 The British Medical Journal filed a small article under the “News” section with the heading: **UK trainee doctors spurn obstetrics and gynaecology** (Brettingham M, *BMJ*, Feb 2006; 332: 323). This was based on a report commissioned by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (<http://www.rcog.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=1318>) which predicted that the specialty of obstetrics and gynaecology is facing a recruitment crisis in the UK. The number of medical students opting for a career in the specialty has fallen dramatically over the past 10 years. Only about two in every 100 medical graduates were now opting for the specialty. The area of the specialty that is responsible for this is probably obstetrics. The reasons are probably related to the real or perceived difficulty in maintaining a good work/life balance. Demanding on-calls, night shifts, unpredictability in the work situation, stressful work situations, the high workload, and an evermore demanding clientele can explain why young doctors choose other specialities. Difficulties with undergraduate attachments, including students (particularly men) being excluded from the delivery room were also to blame. The percentage of male graduates opting for obstetrics and gynaecology in the UK fell to 0.8% in 2002. The same problem seems to be developing in other countries.



Seminar objectives

To take a closer look at the past, present and future role for trainees and specialists in gynaecology and obstetrics in the Nordic countries. Lectures and workshops will focus on problems that need to be addressed and for solutions that can make obstetrics a more attractive specialty. Our hope is that this seminar will result in a catalogue of ideas and recommendations for the participants to take with them back to their individual places of work.

Speakers

We have been fortunate in securing these invigorating speakers - all experienced obstetricians - for our seminar:

Dr. med. Per Børdahl MD Ph D (NOR) *Medical chief Dept. of Obstetrics; Women's Clinic, Haukeland University Hospital*

Prof. Jim Thornton MD Ph D FRCOG (UK) *Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynaecology; University of Nottingham, Nottingham*

Prof. Britt-Ingjerd Nesheim MD Ph D (NOR) *Dean of Medical Education; Faculty of Medicine, Oslo University*

Prof. Dr Þóra Steingrimsdóttir MD Ph D (IS) *Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynaecology; Landspítalinn University Hospital*

Location

Novo Nordisk Scandinavia AB, Arne Jacobsens Allé 15 Copenhagen. Denmark. Overnight accommodation for course participants Friday-Saturday will be in a nearby hotel.

Program (*The program is subject to change. Course participants will be notified if any are made.*)

Friday 1st June

10.00-10.30	Registration and introduction of course participants
10.30-12.00	Per Børdal: Obstetrics - Past, Present and Future
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.15-14.45	Jim Thornton: A Recruitment Crisis
14.45-15.15	Refreshment break
15.15-16.45	Britt-Ingjerd Nesheim: Obstetrics: A Threatened Speciality?
17.00-17.45	Novo Nordisk Sponsored Lecture
18.00	Transportation to Rica City Hotel
19.00	Sponsored dinner at a restaurant in Copenhagen

Saturday 2nd June

09.00-10.30	Póra Steingrimsdóttir: Does The Patient Decide How You Do Your Job?
10.30-10.45	Refreshment Break
10.45-11.30	Plenum Discussion
11.30-11.45	Course Evaluation

Course hours: 8

Booking

The seminar is open to both trainees and specialists in Obs & Gyn and is limited to 30 participants. Applications for booking may be made by sending a request to the local organisation member by email before April 1st 2007:

SWEDEN : Åsa Wahlberg asaulrika73@gmail.com

FINLAND: Jatta Rautakorpi: jasira@utu.fi

ICELAND: Dögg Hauksdóttir: doggh@simnet.is

NORWAY: Stig Hill: stighill@gmail.com

DENMARK: Kirsten Schiøtt: kms@dadlnet.dk

Applicants must submit their name, nationality, grade, and whether they are members of their national gynaecological society (ie EGO, FUGO, FYGO or OGU). Notification will be given if there are vacancies available, with instructions on how to pay the course fee.

Course fee

€ 100. This covers overnight accommodation in Copenhagen from Friday-Saturday for those who require this, but not travel to and from the seminar facilities in Copenhagen, which must be covered by participants. Novo Nordisk is located behind the shopping mall "Fields" at the metro station "Ørestad", 5 min by train from Kastrup airport.

The course has been made possible by funding from Nordic Federation of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and Novo Nordisk. The course fee is payable upon notification that the applicant has been allocated a place. No refunds will be given if cancellations are made less than four weeks before the seminar.



Per Bordahl (b. 1944) is presently Medical Chief at the Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Haukeland University Hospital, Bergen. He graduated in 1970 and has worked as a doctor since then. Specialist in the field of obst/gyn 1978. Doctor of Medicine (PhD) 1985. Experience from a number of departments, both larger and smaller, in Norway and Denmark. Especially interested in operative obstetrics, the history of obstetrics and strategies for further development of operative obstetrics. Published articles, books and held lectures on these subjects.

Summary of Per Bordahl's lecture: Obstetrics: Past, Present and Future

A survey of the development of obstetrics in Scandinavia and a view on the future for the speciality. He will discuss strategies to uphold the high quality of Scandinavian obstetrics.



Jim Thornton was appointed head of the division of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and honorary consultant at the City Hospital Nottingham in April 2002. He qualified in Leeds in 1977 and had been Reader/honorary consultant in Leeds from 1989-2002. His research interests are in clinical trials. His clinical interests are in materno-fetal medicine, general obstetrics, general gynaecology and screening. From 2003-2005 he was Editor-in-Chief of BJOG, an International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. In 2004 he was appointed to MRC Health Service and Public Health Research Board and also became one of the founders of Doctors for Reform ("<http://www.doctorsforreform.com>"). In May 2005 he stood as Conservative Party Parliamentary Candidate for Nottingham East.

Summary of Jim Thornton's lecture: A Recruitment Crisis

UK OB/GYN faces falling recruitment. Both academic and NHS OBGYN appear to be unattractive to locally trained graduates and increasing numbers of posts in Britain are filled by doctors from overseas. Only 12/174 doctors who passed the MRCOG exam in 2004 were UK graduates.

Similar recruitment problems have been reported from the USA and Australia but not generally from the rest of Europe, India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka or Singapore. In the UK surgery, general medicine and paediatrics have also experienced less marked falls in popularity. In contrast general practice, anaesthesia, radiology and pathology have experienced increased popularity.

The reasons are unclear but are probably related to the real or perceived difficulty of maintaining a good work/life balance.

The RCOG, in its report A Career in Obstetrics and Gynaecology 2006, implicitly assumed that a specialty largely staffed by overseas graduates was a problem. The report stated:

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“Our response to these issues has to be positive. The future of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and the future of women’s health in this country depend on an adequate response.”

However the report’s recommendations were feeble. They included:

- Encouragement of undergraduates to consider a career in OBGYN.
- The introduction of career mentors.
- OBGYN champions during the foundation (first two) years of training.
- Better publicity
- Improved work life balance in future consultant appointments

They did not apparently consider two other possible options:

- Differential salaries (or reduced hours for the same salary)
- NHS reform along continental European (social insurance) lines.

Nor did they apparently consider acceptance of the status quo, although this is what they are likely to get.

The specialty will remain largely staffed by overseas graduates for the foreseeable future unless it can be made substantively more attractive than alternative career paths.



Britt-Ingjerd Nesheim is professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at the University of Oslo. Her work as a clinician has been mainly in obstetrics, and she has been Head of the Department of Obstetrics at Ullevål University Hospital for 13 years. She is currently Dean of Medical Education at The Faculty of Medicine, University of Oslo.

Summary of Britt-Ingjerd Nesheim’s lecture: Obstetrics: A Threatened Speciality?

I have worked almost 40 years in this speciality and am in no doubt as to how it has changed character. In the pre-ultrasound and pre-CTG era, while the caesarean section frequency was 2%, vaginal operative delivery was an exciting challenge. Difficult breech deliveries, foot extraction of the second twin and rotational forceps were common procedures. The mothers and we were happy when everything went well, and if it didn't, it was sad, but part of the

struggle of life. Litigation and complaints weren't invented. The greatest psychological pressure now probably lies in the expectation from patients that everything connected to pregnancy and birth will proceed without a hitch, and being made a scapegoat by them if it doesn't. To be pursued by bitter patients and their next of kin - maybe hung out to dry in the media - seems to be what we dread the most. It makes it much worse that this often comes in addition to our self-criticism - whether this is justified or not. If one doesn't have the backing from one's colleagues, then such experiences are difficult to come through without permanent psychological scars.

How can we make obstetrics a more attractive speciality? I will discuss four key areas to focus on.



Póra (Thora) Steingrimsdóttir (b.1958) is currently a Consultant and Clinical Associate Professor at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Landspítalinn University Hospital, Reykjavík. She graduated in 1983 (University of Iceland) and received her training in obs and gyn in Iceland and Uppsala. PhD Uppsala University 1996. Póra has worked in Iceland since 1998, mainly in obstetrics. Her special interests are psychosocial obstetrics, fear of childbirth and related subjects.

Summary of Póra Steingrimsdóttir's lecture: Does The Patient Decide How You Do Your Job?

I would like to contribute to this seminar with an interactive talk about our clients'/patients' rights to decide and choose in obstetrics, especially to choose the mode of delivery, i.e. in the end it is about maternal request of caesarean section.

Hopefully there will be some lively discussions during the talk. The limited number of seminar participants (30) and their own clinical experience makes that possible.

Research in this field is rather scanty so the talk will first and foremost be based on clinical experience from "the floor". Some cases will be presented.

The main questions we will seek answers to are following:

- Why do we counsel different women differently?
- Can we accept that laymen's advices are outweighing our professional advice?
- Do we have the right to choose or refuse?
- How do we manage to be professional and feel sympathy at the same time, when we don't like our patient's request?

- How are our own emotions ruling our counselling?
- Is it our fault that so many women rely better on caesarean section than vaginal delivery? Should we change our “propaganda”?
- Can both parts end up as winners in the duel of caesarean section without medical indications?
- How important is it to remain loyal to our colleagues when opinions are dividing?



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Nordic Federation of Young Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

have planned and arranged this seminar

Snorri Einarsson (Iceland)

Dögg Hauksdóttir (Iceland)

Susanne Hesselman (Sweden)

Stig Alexander Rekkedal Hill (Norway)

Kevin Sunde Oppegaard (Norway)

Päivi Kristiina Rahkola (Finland)

Jatta Rautkorpi (Finland)

Kirsten Marie Schiøtt (Denmark)

Marie Søgaard (Denmark)

Åsa Wahlberg (Sweden)

Board members consist of trainees and newly qualified specialists in obstetrics and gynaecology from the Nordic countries. Membership is usually for two-three years. Please contact your local organisation representative if you are interested in joining us!