

Report - EFORT Travelling Fellowship

Norway, May 11th-16th, 2009

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EFORT Travelling Fellowship NORWAY, May 11th-16th, 2009

In May 2009 18 fellows from 15 different countries were invited to participate in the EFORT Spring Travelling Fellowship 2009 which was hosted by the Norwegian Orthopaedic Society (Norsk Ortopedisk Forening).

Norway has 4.8 million inhabitants and covers an area of 385.252km² with a coastline of 25.148km. Due to its geography and climate (one part of the country is north of the polar circle), it is a challenge to provide specialist healthcare, especially in the very remote areas. About 10.5% of the GDP is spent on health (5th rank worldwide). There are approximately 3 medical doctors for every 1000 inhabitants (14th rank worldwide). Norway maintains a Scandinavian welfare model with universal healthcare which is managed by four regional health authorities.

The medical education is provided by 4 medical schools and university hospitals (Tromsø, Trondheim, Bergen and Oslo) with an additional university hospital in Stavanger.

As in most other countries, the orthopaedic training in Norway is a 6-year program. Currently, there are 151 resident positions, about 16 residents graduate each year.

During our visit, we were able to visit 3 of the 4 medical schools and their university hospitals (Bergen, Trondheim and Oslo).

BERGEN, Haukeland University Hospital (May 11th-12th)

Bergen is the second largest city in Norway with a population of 250,000. Founded by King Olav in 1070 AD it was also briefly the capital of Norway (1217-1299 AD).

Haukeland University Hospital, founded in 1912, has 1100 beds.



Haukeland University Hospital, Bergen

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The scientific program included a presentation of the well known Norwegian Arthroplasty Register as well as the Norwegian Hip Fracture Register. Day 2 was dedicated to biomechanical studies with an interesting visit to the associated biomechanical lab.

Socially, we enjoyed a very interesting sight-seeing tour of the city, concluded by a wonderful dinner at the restaurant "Bellevue" with a truly fantastic view over the city of Bergen and the fjord.



View of Bergen from the Bellevue Restaurant

TRONDHEIM, St Olavs University Hospital (May 13th-14th)

Trondheim is the third largest city in Norway with a population of 168,000. It was originally named "Kaupangen" (meaning "market place or trading place") by Viking King Olav Tryggvason in 997 and later named Trondheim. Until 1217, Trondheim was the capital of Norway. Up until today, the famous Nidaros Cathedral is the coronation church of the Norwegian kings.

Trondheim's educational history dates back to 1152, the foundation of Norway's oldest school: the "Scholae Cathedralis Nidrosiensis". Today, Trondheim is considered Norway's "student town No. 1" with over 20.000 students.

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St Olavs University Hospital, founded in 1902, has 1366 beds.



St Olavs University Hospital, Trondheim (old and new)

The main topics of the scientific program included the custom made hip prosthesis (with a live operation in the "OR of the future"), orthopaedic infections and a presentation of the Norwegian ACL Registry.

After another interesting sight-seeing tour of the city, we were invited to the home of the Vice President of the Norwegian Orthopaedic Society, Kjetil Holen, on Wednesday evening. This was a wonderful opportunity to the fellows and our hosts for very interesting discussions, which often went beyond the medical profession.



Dinner at Kjetil Holen, Trondheim

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OSLO, Rikshospitalet University Hospital and Ullevål University Hospital (May 15th-16th)

Oslo is Norway's largest city and its capital since 1299 with a population of 580,000. It was founded around 1049 by King Harald Hardråde. From 1624 until 1925 it was called "Christiania" after the Danish-Norwegian king Christian IV who rebuilt the city after a destructive fire in 1624.

Rikshospitalet University Hospital, founded in 1826, has 525 beds.

Ullevål University Hospital, founded in 1887, has 1200 beds.

Together with the Aker University hospital, those three hospitals merged into a health trust, called the "Oslo University Hospital" in January 2009, representing the biggest hospital in Scandinavia.



Rikshospitalet University Hospital, Oslo

Visit of the King's guard, giving a concert the day before May 17th

The scientific program was presented at two sites, Rikshospitalet and Olympiatoppen. At Rikshospitalet, mostly children's orthopaedic topics were presented and discussed. At Olympiatoppen, which is the home of the Sportsmedicine and Arthroscopy Research Department of Ullevål University Hospital as well as the medical and training center for the leading athletes of Norway, most of the time was dedicated to the knee in particular and arthroscopy in general.

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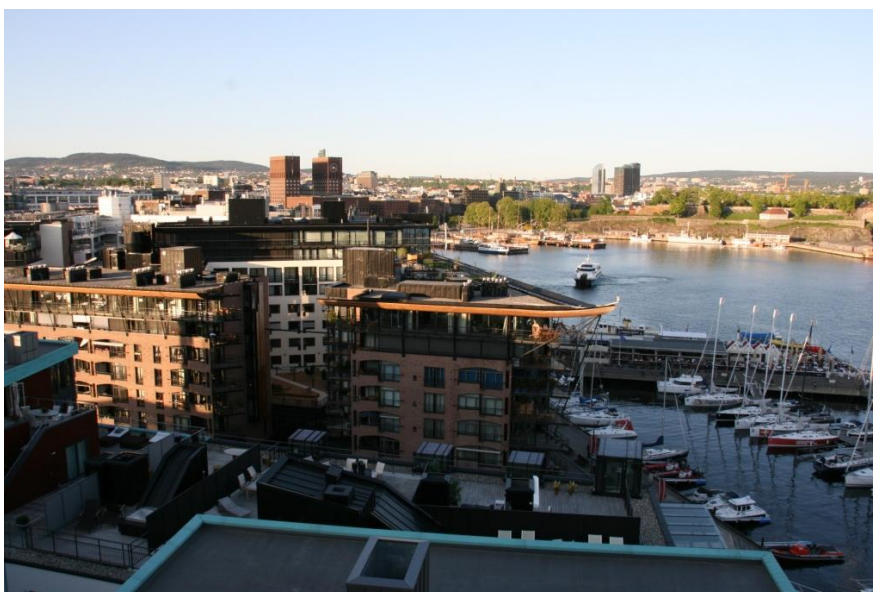
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Lecture Hall at Rikshospitalet University Hospital, Oslo

Oslo included also a very “demanding” social program:

The first evening, we were invited to a formal dinner at the fantastic new opera house of Oslo (only shortly interrupted by a false fire-alarm). The second evening, Dr. Trine Sand Kaastad, Head of the Clinic of ENT, Plastic- and Orthopaedic Surgery at Rikshospitalet, invited us to her apartment at “Aker Brygge” with a great view of the harbour, town hall and the royal castle. After a wonderful Norwegian dinner, most of the group joined some of the local Rikshospitalet-residents for a guided tour of Oslo’s nightlife.



View of “Aker Brygge”, Oslo

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As in Bergen and Trondheim, a well guided sight-seeing tour of the city was also included. Finally, on the last day, Prof. Lars Engebretsen, after having hosted the whole day at Olympiatoppen, also invited us to his home where we all enjoyed the last evening together. After the last cigar (kindly sponsored by Prof. Engebretsen) was put out, it was time to say good-bye.

Some of the participant's found the time to watch the celebrations of Norway's National holiday, the 17th of May, before they started their trip home individually.

We are all very grateful to the Norsk Ortopedisk Forening with their President, Hebe Desiree Kvernmo, for having organized a fantastic week in Norway with a comprehensive and excellent scientific program.

Special thanks to Torgeir Vestad, who was always with us from the first until the last minute, and never lost any of us.

We would also like to thank our Norwegian friends and colleagues who were brave enough to invite all of us to their wonderful homes.

All of us benefited a great deal not only scientifically but also socially from this fellowship as we met a lot of new friends from all over Europe (and Brazil).

I would personally like to thank the Swiss Orthopaedic Society for giving me the opportunity to participate in this fellowship and profit from it in the abovementioned manner.

Arne Mehrkens



Fellows in front of the Oslo Opera House

Left to right: Martin Polacek (Norway), Eduardo Zaniol Migon (Brasil), Srdjan Stamenkovic (Serbia), Jon Matthews (UK), Rui Carlo (Portugal), Arne Mehrkens (Switzerland), Joaquin De Lamo (Spain), Mark Murnaghan (Ireland), Lorenz Büchler (Switzerland), Andrej Strahovnik (Slovenia), Thehmed Dhahad (Sweden), Edwin Jansen (Netherlands), Hebe Desiree Kvernmo (Norway, President of the NOF), Burak Yagmur Öztürk (Turkey), Adam Gerthard Span (Hungary), Christian Wimmer (Germany), Knut Harboe (Norway), Matthias Therbo (Denmark)
Not in the picture: Mette Andersen (Norway)