

## Nordic PhD Conference in Dentistry at Lillehammer, Norway

A Nordic PhD conference was arranged at Lillehammer in the south-eastern part of Norway from February 11-13, 2009. This conference was the first in a series of events to mark the 50's anniversary of the Faculty of Dentistry at the University of Oslo. The Faculty of Dentistry was established at the University of Oslo in 1959. From 1928 and until 1959 dental education and research in Norway were carried out in the dental school, Tannlegehøyskolen, in Oslo only. By inviting young scientists in the beginning of their career, focus was directed against the future rather than the past.

When the dental school became part of the University, more emphasis was put on science. Organised programs were established for scientists already in the 1960's and dental education based more on a scientific background introduced. This has, without doubt, improved the quality of the dental education during these 50 years. The same development has, of course, occurred in all the Nordic countries. It was therefore not a surprise that we at this conference could gather so many young, talented scientists from almost all the Nordic countries.

The site of the conference was the historic town Lillehammer at the gateway to the Gudbrandsdalen valley. The town is with its 26,000 inhabitants the commercial, administrative, culture and educational centre of the region. In addition the town is world famous for hosting the Olympic Winter Games in 1994 and a popular tourist destination – with more than 1 million visitors every year. Lillehammer is the home of the Norwegian Film School and Lillehammer University College with about 4,000 students, and the town is also well known for its architecture and its active cultural life hosting institutions as Lillehammer Art museum, Lillehammer Town Orchestra, the homes of the Nobel Prize winners of Literature;

Sigrid Undset and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and the historic museum at Maihaugen. About 75 PhD students, post doctors and scientists participated. Therefore, the conference gave a fairly good view of the current research activity in dentistry in the Nordic countries. More than 20 oral presentations were given. Topics varied from craniofacial growth and development and radiology in juvenile idiopathic arthritis, periimplantitis, osseointegration of implants, squamous cell carcinoma, oral carcinoma-associated fibroblasts, oral health epidemiology and periodontal conditions in developing countries and Crohns disease, probiotics and oral health, ameloblastin expression and its effect in hard tissues and gene expression during tooth development. In addition a series of posters were open for discussion during a separate session.

Four keynote speakers were invited to give talks about implants or microbiology. The first two speakers were established scientists and well known internationally. Dr. Daniel Thoma from Center for Dental and Oral Medicine and CranioMaxillofacialSurgery, University of Zurich, Switzerland, talked about "Potential of growth factors for localised ridge augmentation". Professor Jan Eirik Ellingsen from Institute of Dentistry at the Faculty of Dentistry, University of Oslo, gave a presentation on "The impact of surface topography and chemistry on osseointegration of dental implants".

The keynote lectures in microbiology were given by two young scientists from Institute of Oral Biology at The Faculty of Dentistry, University of Oslo. Dr. Nibras Abdul-Majeed had finished her PhD in 2008 and talked about "The hidden bacterial lifestyle: from signaling to biofilms and survival". Dr. Dorita Preza will defend her PhD in May this year, and gave a presentation with the title: "Oral microbiota of

the elderly assessed by molecular methods.”

This conference gave also the PhD candidates and post doctors the opportunity to create research networks and share scientific knowledge and experience with each other. Many of these researchers will hold head positions in the Nordic countries in the years to come. Therefore a close knowledge of colleagues in the other Nordic countries will be of outmost importance for future collaboration and research across the countries.

A popular brake in the conference was the outdoor activities in the winterlandscape with sunshine and minus 20 degrees Celsius and included tobogganing, bungy-run, snow volley and ice sculpturing.

The conference was closed by the previous dean of research at the Faculty of Dentistry, professor Ingar Olsen who had taken the initiative to the conference.

We hope that similar conferences could be arranged every second year among the Nordic countries and look forward to the next meeting in 2011 in either Sweden or Denmark.