



NORWAY 1946

NSMB

The brief history of the Norwegian Society of Medical Biochemistry

The early days of clinical chemistry in Norway

The first academic position related to laboratory medicine in Norway was established at Rikshospitalet in 1858 being responsible for "performing the chemical, microscopical and pathological analysis for the treatment of patients and for teaching". The following years the trend was that the various clinical departments in hospitals organized their own local laboratory service. Ullevaal sykehus was the first hospital to establish a "central laboratory service" in 1937 and was rapidly followed by the other major hospitals. The organization of laboratory medicine/clinical chemistry on the scientific level started in 1932 with the "Physiology club" including members with interest in physiology and biological chemistry. The activity of the club increased slowly, but was almost inactive during the years 1940-45.

The year 1946 – when everything happened.

After five years of war it became quite clear that both the scientific activity and the organization of medical biochemistry in Norway was far behind that of comparable countries such as Sweden and Denmark, and certainly also the US. In order to improve, the "Physiology club" was now formally organized as the "The Norwegian Society of Medical Physiology" (MFF) in 1946. Their first task was to have "medical biochemistry and physiology" accepted as a medical speciality by the Norwegian Medical Society and the healthcare authorities. They succeeded in just a few months. Also in 1946 the Society organized a meeting with colleagues from Denmark, Sweden and Finland at Finse, situated at 1222 meters above sea level being the southern-most arctic area, only accessible by train. This extremely remote place was chosen for the meeting in order not to be disturbed during the scientific discussions. At the Finse meeting the "Nordic Society of Clinical Chemistry" (NFKK) was founded. During the following almost fifty years NFKK has been an active umbrella organization for the national societies of clinical chemistry within the Nordic countries. The Finse meeting is also counted as the "First Nordic Congress in Clinical Chemistry".

From Medical Biochemistry to Clinical Chemistry - and back

In 1963 the health care authorities decided that medical biochemistry and clinical physiology should be organized as separate specialities, now named clinical chemistry and clinical physiology. It was however decided that the two specialities should have a common society, The Norwegian Society of Clinical Chemistry and Clinical Physiology" (NFKKKF). During the following years the memberships increased together with increased activity, both at the national, Nordic and international level. The members of NFKKKF were actively and enthusiastically involved in the various projects and committees organized by NFKK, IFCC and the different European societies. Members from Norway were especially involved in projects related to quality control, standardisation of analytical methods and procedures (especially related to enzymes), the use of IT in clinical chemistry, development and improvement of new technology, education, publication and organization of research.

In the late 1990s clinical physiology more or less disappeared as a speciality mainly because the activities were included in other specialities such as nuclear medicine, cardiology and neurology. The content of clinical chemistry had also changed especially due to the heavy automation that started in the 1980's. The clinical chemists were increasingly involved in selecting and testing new biomarkers, in quality assurance, in teaching, as advisors and last but not least in research. It was thus decided in 2002 to change the name of the speciality to "medical biochemistry" and the name of the society was changed to "Norwegian Society of Medical Biochemistry" (NSMB).



The Editors of the NSMB history book. Helle Borgstrøm Hager, Tor-Arne Hagve, Ludvig NW Daae.



The Board of NSMB 2014-15. Trine Lauritzen, Yngve Thomas Bliksrud (chairman), Erik Koldberg Amundsen, Lutz Schwettmann, Maria Averina. Ann Helen Kristoffersen not present.



The NSMB logotype.



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As for the name of the speciality and the society the circle was now closed after 40 years.

The very first international medical journal edited in Norway was founded by the Norwegian Society of Medical Biochemistry. Members of the "MFF" had for years discussed the need for a Scandinavian journal with focus on medical biochemistry. After several unsuccessful attempts the Norwegian society managed to convince the other national societies of the importance and impact of a proper journal for the research activity in Scandinavia. The first issue of "The Scandinavian Journal of Clinical and Laboratory Investigation" (SJCLI) was published in april 1949. SJCLI is still, after 65 years in full activity and with an increasing impact factor (approximately 2). The Editorial board includes two editors from each of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, in addition to the Editorial Office with the Managing Editor and the Editorial Secretary, located in Oslo, Norway.

NSMB today

The society is today an active and prosperous organization with 143 enthusiastic, clever and aspiring members (most of them MDs). Members for NSMB are involved in the central leadership and in several working groups of ECLM, in working groups of IFCC as well as in NFKK, and in scientific committees of both Euromed congresses and IFCC congresses. At the moment NSMB has established national working groups with focus on recommendations and standardisation for the use of myocardial biomarkers, estimated GFR, HbA1c and national recommendation for the diagnosis of hemoglobinopathies. Members of NSMB are also heavily involved in the successful national organisations for quality control of the analytical activity both in hospital laboratories (NKK) and in general practice (NOKLUS).

NSMB is responsible for arranging the annual scientific membership meeting at various locations in Norway, by appointing local arrangement committees. These meeting points are important for the reinforcement of professional and social network in the speciality. NSMB is also arranging national teleconference education 2-3 times every month. All participating laboratories must contribute with lectures.

Most members of NSMB have been involved in the publishing of a "National Handbook of Medical Biochemistry" describing in detail more than 300 parameters. The first edition of the book was published in 1997 and recently the fourth edition was released on the web (www.brugerhandboken.no) and as an app (Medisinsk biokjemi). In 2014 NSMB launched an history book (figure) describing the activities of the society the last 30 years, in the belief that knowing the history may promote a closer identity among the members.

Tor-Arne Hagve, Helle Borgstrøm Hager, Ludvig NW Daae.