

## Editorial

## Nordic Theme 2017 – Gerodontology

As described in one of the articles in this Nordic Theme Issue, major demographic changes in the population of the Nordic countries have taking place in recent years. There are more old adults, both in absolute and relative terms, and they live longer. Moreover, the changes in the occurrence of oral diseases in the general population are also reflected in the older population; fewer people are edentulous and the dentate persons have lost fewer teeth. Or in other words, more of our older patients will live for many years with many teeth. This is a trend that will continue for years to come.

With increasing age, the risk of general diseases or impairment also increases. Moreover, in the group of old adults the accumulation of oral and dental problems combined with the general health problems will give rise to distinctive oral treatment needs and needs for prophylactic initiatives. To handle the particular problems seen in the healthy old adults and also to meet the challenges in maintaining the teeth in the very last years of life in those with impaired health places great demands on the dentist and indeed the entire dental profession.

In this Nordic Theme Issue these aspects are considered in a number of articles. Firstly, the status and future trends of demographic changes and occurrence of oral diseases in the older population are described as well as educational, organizational and financial perspectives on geriatric dentistry. Also biological and pharmacological aspects of general diseases in the older population and its influence on oral and dental treatment are considered. Prophylaxis as well as treatment of dental diseases – root caries, tooth fractures, endodontic aspects and periodontal diseases and

tooth loss both in the healthy and generally impaired old adults are dealt with in different articles. Special attention is given to communicative, cooperative and ethical aspects of the management of the elderly with cognitive and behavioural impairment and to the challenge of maintaining patient contact with older adults in community dwelling houses.

The planning of this Nordic Theme Issue has been accomplished by an ad hoc Editorial Committee, the authors, and the national editorial boards. The Editorial Committee has consisted of Gunhild Strand (Norway), Inger Wårdh (Sweden), Timo Närhi (Finland) and Flemming Isidor (Denmark). The Editorial Committee together with Editor-in-chief of The Danish Dental Journal Nils-Erik Fiehn have identified the different topics and indicated the general content of the various articles. Leading persons in the Nordic countries within the various subjects have been invited and have also agreed to be authors of the articles. Gratitude should be expressed not least to the authors for their interesting and knowledgeable contributions, but also to the other involved persons in the emergence of this Nordic Theme Issue.

Enjoy your reading!

*Gunhild Strand, Inger Wårdh, Timo Närhi og Flemming Isidor*