

1 · 1997

NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the International Academy of Legal Medicine



Dear Members,

I hope that the new year has started well. During this year we will try to give you some insight into the various medico-legal systems in the world. The first issue of the Newsletter gives us an introduction to the present situation of legal medicine in Norway. The author is Prof. Torleiv Ole Rognum from the Institute of Forensic Medicine of the University of Oslo, Norway. He is also one of the Editors of the Journal *Rettsmedisin*, the Organ of the Norwegian and Danish Medico-Legal Associations.

Contributions to this Newsletter should be sent to

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Efforts to organize legal medicine service in Norway

Torleiv Ole Rognum, Institute of Forensic Medicine, University of Oslo, Norway

In spite of the fact that legal medicine has been read as long as Norway has had its own university, no government office has been responsible for production of legal medical services, and there is still no medical specialty in legal medicine. Therefore the Norwegian Society of Forensic Medicine has produced a report on the *Organization of Legal Medicine Service*. In 1997 it seems that there will be a government report on the same issue.

History

Legal medicine has been read at the University of Oslo since 1814. The first reader, Michael Skjelderup, was appointed professor in Copenhagen and had to cross Cattegat to take up his duty in Oslo. This was not easy because English and Swedish cruisers had blocked the sea way between Denmark and Norway, which happened to be on the French side during the Napoleonic War. Michael Skjelderup bought a ship in Aalborg for the journey, but had to return three times. The fourth time he hired a captain who was neither afraid of the English nor the Swedish. Skjelderup was actually shot at from a Swedish cruiser, but because of good wind and high speed, he succeeded in reaching the coast of Norway.

Michael Skjelderup published the first textbook on legal medicine in Norwegian in 1838. One hundred years later, in 1938 an Institute of Forensic Medicine was established at the University of Oslo. From 1991 on all four medical schools in Norway have had university chairs in legal medicine.

Grass-root initiative for better organization of forensic medical activities

The Norwegian Society of Forensic Medicine was founded in 1993. The society has 132 members with backgrounds in legal medicine in the broad sense of the word. There are currently only nine forensic pathologists practising in Norway. They are all employed by the universities.

Rettsmedisin is the name of the journal the society started in 1995. As of 1996, it became a Nordic enterprise with the Danish Society of Forensic Medicine as co-sponsor. In 1997 the Swedes will join the editorial board and the name of the journal is now *Nordisk Rettsmedisin*. Four issues are published per year.

Committee report on organization of legal medical service

In 1996 a committee, appointed by the Norwegian Society of Forensic Medicine delivered a report on the:

- organization of legal medical service
- requirements for specialists
- need for a separate specialty

The conclusions of the committee were as follows:

1. One government office of forensic medicine should be responsible for:
 - establishing competence
 - development of service
 - production of service
2. A protocol for training forensic pathologists will be proposed – according to the ECLM requirements.
3. A separate medical specialty of legal medicine/forensic pathology is proposed. The general assembly of The Norwegian Society of Forensic Medicine agreed on the conclusions in the report; however, in parallel with working for a separate medical specialty in legal medicine, the society will work for certification of other medical and non-medical specialists working for the court.

Government initiative for better organization

In December 1996 the Ministry of Police and Justice decided to initiate a group to work out an official report on the organization of legal medicine service in the future.

Conclusion

The struggle for efficient and modern organization of legal medicine service in Norway has just begun. The Norwegian Society of Forensic Medicine has committed itself to working for a separate medical specialty of legal medicine. The society is well aware that there are institutions and interests that will mobilize against such a specialty. Nevertheless, inspired by the heroic and successful voyage by Michael Skjelderup in 1814, the Norwegian Society of Forensic Medicine is in good spirit and is convinced that it will reach its goal.

DIARY OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**MÜNSTER, GERMANY, 19–22 March 1997**

29. Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Verkehrsmedizin

Further information: Professor Bernd Brinkmann, Institut für Rechtsmedizin der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität, Von-Esmarch-Strasse 86, D-48149 Münster, Germany, Tel.: +49 (251) 8355 151; FAX: +49 (251) 8355 158

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN, 28 June – 1 July 1997

6th Congress of ESBRA, European Society of Biomedical Research on Alcoholism

Further information: Chairman of the 6th Congress: Associate Professor Stefan Borg, Karolinska Institute, Department of Neuroscience, St Görans Hospital, Box 12557, S-102 29 Stockholm, Sweden, Tel.: +46 (8) 672 1451; FAX: +46 (8) 672 1904

OSLO, NORWAY, 2–5 July 1997

Meeting of the European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicologists

Further information: Congress Secretariate EAPCCT Scientific meeting Oslo 1977 c/o Help Arrangement-Service AS, P.O. Box 527, N-1301 Sandvika, Norway

ODENSE, DENMARK, 13–16 August 1997

The XIII Nordic Congress of Forensic Medicine

Further information: Institute of Forensic Medicine, Winsløwparken 17, DK-5000 Odense C. Denmark, Tel.: +45 (66) 127 530; FAX: +45 (66) 131 338

DUBLIN, IRELAND, 20–23 August 1997

The XVII Congress of the International Academy of Legal Medicine (IALM)

Further information: Professor J.F.A. Harbison, Office of the State Pathologist and T.C.D./R.C.S.I. Department of Forensic Medicine, 188 Pearse Street, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland, Tel.: +353 (1) 671 9835; FAX: +353 (1) 677 2694 or Ms. Louise Loughran, Conference Secretary, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, 123 Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland, where the Congress will be held

VERONA, ITALY, 29 August 1997

Theoretical and practical workshop on CAPILLARY ELECTROPHORESIS IN THE FORENSIC SCIENCES

Further information: Dr. Franco Tagliaro, Institute of Forensic Medicine, University of Verona, Policlinico Borgo Roma, I-37134 Verona, Italy, FAX: +39 (45) 505 259

ANNECY, FRANCE, 21–25 September 1997

14th International Conference on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety

Further information: CERMT, BP 132, F-74004 Annecy Cédex, France

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK, 26 June – 2 July 1998

The 9th Congress of the International Society for Biomedical Research on Alcoholism (ISBRA)

Further information: Professor Christer Alling, Department of Medical Neurochemistry, Institute of Laboratory Medicine, University Hospital, S-221 85 Lund, Sweden



ACADÉMIE INTERNATIONALE DE MÉDECINE LÉGALE
INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF LEGAL MEDICINE

CANDIDATURE

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Last Name..... First Name(s)..... Title.....

Address for correspondence

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Tel.: FAX: e-mail:

Brief Curriculum Vitae:

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