



## **Nordic research network on safety in health care**

### **Problem area**

#### ***Patient safety***

Patient safety is an important issue from economic, ethical and work environmental perspectives. An investigation by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare showed that approximately 105 000 care related patient injuries per year occur in Swedish somatic hospital care, leading to 630 000 additional days of hospital care.

([www.socialstyrelsen.se/Amnesord/patient\\_klientsakerhet/specnavigation/Kunskap/Vardskador](http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/Amnesord/patient_klientsakerhet/specnavigation/Kunskap/Vardskador), 2008).

#### ***Occupational safety***

Although health care generally is not one of the occupational branches with the highest rates of occupational accidents, accidents here still constitute a significant problem, particularly among women. Since a large number of women are employed in health care the total number of accidents in this sector constitute 10% of all serious occupational accidents to women in Sweden (Jansson, Larsson, Normark, Oldertz, & Tezic, 2008).

### **Nordic research network on safety in health care – constituents, scope and aim**

The network comprises researchers presently performing or planning studies on safety in the health care sector. The research may be in regards to either or both patient safety and occupational safety. The main perspectives concern social-psychological processes and development of organizational structures promoting safety. The research aims to develop theories and research methodology in the field as well as the development and assessment of effective safety management systems.

The network was established in 2009 and had its first meeting at the University of Gothenburg March 2009. A second meeting was held in Gothenburg in January 2010. A decision was made that coordination of the network will alternate and be taken on by each Nordic nation for one year at a time. The School of Technology and Health (KTH) in Stockholm will take

over for the next year, and at a meeting early next year we hope a group from one of the other participating Nordic countries will accept to coordinate for the coming year.

### *Financing*

The network will apply to the Nordic Council of Ministers for network financing,

A possibility for future financing is also to answer the call from the European Science Foundation, regarding social science research.

Although the network is primarily directed towards Nordic researchers it does not exclude the participation of researchers of other nationalities.

**The aim of the Nordic research network on safety in health care** is to create a forum for knowledge development regarding safety in health care, by constituting a competence pool of researchers within this area. The extent of cooperation within the network will depend on the availability of financial support:

- If no specific resources are made available to the network its activities will be limited to e-mail exchange of information.
- Through a financial network support, meetings in network sub-groups to discuss common areas of interest and expertise, as well as to prepare and formulate common research projects or programs will be possible, as well as the organization of a yearly network seminar, discussing theoretical and methodological issues.
- If, in addition to network support, certain means are made available on a long term basis a web based network homepage may be developed and maintained, containing e.g. research reports and information on meetings and educational courses related to the network theme, thus making such information easily available to the network participants as well as to the users in practice of the research results.
- An addition of financial project support will also enable performance of empirical studies, for theoretical and methodological development, as well as evaluating organizational and safety management systems interventions.