

Nordic Gerontological Federation

# GeroNord

News on research, developmental work and education within the  
ageing area in the Nordic Countries

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LinkedIn for news and updates about the 27NKG!

## Words from the President

Dear friends & colleagues,

Christmas is near. Many of you are probably busy completing work tasks, so you can take time off during the Christmas holidays. Some may have gone on holiday already, while others will probably be working over Christmas. But anyway, as holidays are approaching, many of us need to speed up - so that we can finally slow down. In this newsletter you can read about acceleration and resonance, among other things. This was the theme at the Danish Gerontological Society's annual conference, and it was a suitable theme for discussing aging research and everyday life as it unfolds in modern society. In the newsletter you can also read news from the other Nordic countries. WHO and the Nordic Welfare Center has met in Copenhagen with representatives from the Nordic countries to discuss age-friendly cities. People with dementia and their partners have met in group interventions in Finland. Older people with low literacy have met on a digital platform to strengthen their literacy, and a PhD student has met with a lot of older people with alcohol problems in connection with his PhD.

You can also read about the big gerontological meeting that will take place next year. In the competent and creative hands of the Swedish organizing committee the Nordic Congress of Gerontology in Stockholm, June, 2024 promises to be at least as good and rich an experience as the previous Nordic congresses have been. There is a strong cooperation between the Swedish organizers and the organizers from previous congresses. Thanks to the good opportunities for online meetings we discovered during the COVID lock down, we have had close contact. I think it will make the preparation of the future congresses more easy (or hardly as burdensome), so that we can hold on to the important gerontological meeting place that the Nordic congresses constitute.

In 2024, it will be 50 years since the Nordic Gerontological Federation was founded. If you have knowledge of the early years of the NGF - or know someone who does - we would like to hear from you. We look forward to celebrating NGF with you in Stockholm!

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you.**

***Warm Regards***



**Jette Thuesen**

President of the Nordic Gerontological Federation



## Call for candidates for the Sohlberg Prize 2024

The Sohlberg Prize of 10.000 Euro is sponsored by the Päivikki and Sakari Sohlberg Foundation and is the most prestigious Nordic prize in Gerontology.

- The Sohlberg prize will be awarded at the 27NKG in Stockholm.
- The prize is relevant for all aging sciences and is awarded to a scientist active in a Nordic country who is a leader in gerontology with a major influence on the development of her/his field in aging research.
- To be considered the candidate should have built a strong research group or initiated research of major importance for developments in gerontology.
- The prize will be awarded by a jury including the president and two vice presidents of NGF and the two most recent prize-winners.

The nomination should be sent to the president of NGF, Jette Thuesen: [jette.thuesen@rsyd.dk](mailto:jette.thuesen@rsyd.dk). **Deadline for nominations is 15 January 2024.**

## Call for candidates for the Prize for Promising Researcher in Gerontology

At the 27NKG in Stockholm, the Prize for Promising Researcher will be awarded to a candidate from the country that hosts the following Nordic Congress of Gerontology, namely Finland. Thus, only candidates from **Finland** are applicable this time.

- The proposed candidate must not hold a senior position but should preferably have concluded a PhD.
- A member association of NGF can nominate the candidate to the prize. Argumentation and a CV must follow. No direct applications will be accepted.
- The jury consists of the president and two vice presidents of the NGF and the chairs of the scientific committees in the current and for the next congress.
- The prize-winner will receive an amount of 24.000 SEK and give a lecture at a ceremony during the congress
- The prize-winner will not pay any registration fee at the 27th congress. Expenses for travel (in economy if by flight) and accommodation during the congress will be paid by NGF.
- At the 27th Nordic Congress of Gerontology in Stockholm the NGF prize for promising researcher in gerontology will be handed out for the 6th time.

The nomination should be sent to the president of NGF, Jette Thuesen: [jette.thuesen@rsyd.dk](mailto:jette.thuesen@rsyd.dk)

**Deadline for nominations is 15 January 2024.**

## The NGF and the 27NKG offer travel grants for participation in the 27th Nordic Congress of Gerontology 2024, Stockholm

13 grants are offered for congress participation, two grants for each Nordic country and one for each of the three Baltic countries.

- Grants are aimed for scholars who have difficulties raising funds to cover their cost of attending to the congress.
- Grants can only be applied by PhD candidates and non-senior researchers from the field of gerontology and geriatrics.
- The application will be evaluated by the local scientific committee, the president of the congress and the president of the NGF.
- Applicants need to submit an abstract. Grants are not awarded without an approved abstract.
- Each grant is 5.000 SEK and free participation in the congress.

Applications should be sent to Congress President Carin

Lennartsson: [carin.lennartsson@ki.se](mailto:carin.lennartsson@ki.se) and Secretary General Amaia Calderón

Larrañaga: [amaia.calderon.larranaga@ki.se](mailto:amaia.calderon.larranaga@ki.se)

**Deadline for applications is 15 February 2024**

### Upcoming important dates

- **15 January 2024:** Deadline for the nominations for the Sohlberg Prize and the Prize for Promising researcher. Notification for accepted symposia.
- **25 January 2024:** Deadline for abstracts for the oral presentations and posters.
- **15 February 2024:** Deadline for applications for travel grants.
- **26 February 2024:** Notification about acceptance of abstracts.
- **29 February 2024:** End of Early Bird registration.



## The IAGG-ER Congress is postponed to 2025

Instead the NGF encourages members to join the 27<sup>th</sup> Nordic Congress of Gerontology in Sweden.

The Executive Committee of the IAGG-ER would like to announce the next IAGG-ER conference previously expected to be held in Malaga in June 2024 is postponed to the first half of 2025. New date and location will be communicated soon.

We invite you to visit our IAGG-ER website <https://www.iagg-er.eu/> for more information on IAGG-ER, the conference and our current activities.

***Katarzyna Szczerbińska, IAGG-ER Secretary,***

on behalf of the President and the Executive Committee of IAGG-ER

Instead the NGF encourages members to join the 27th Nordic Congress of Gerontology, in Stockholm 12-14 June 2024.

The Nordic Congress of Gerontology (NKG) was originally a Nordic congress but has since developed into a significant ageing conference that draws attendees worldwide while maintaining its relaxed Nordic vibe. The 27th edition will be held at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden under the theme "Ageing in a transforming world".

[Please visit the homepage for more information.](#)

***Carin Lennartsson, President of 27NKG & Jette Thuesen, president of NGF 2022 – 2024***



WHO Global Network  
for Age-friendly Cities  
and Communities

## Building age-friendly cities in the Nordic countries

On November 2–3 2023 municipalities, researchers and experts gathered at the UN City in Copenhagen, Denmark, to learn from each other and share best practices between the Nordic countries. The conference was organized by the Nordic Welfare Centre and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Today, there are over 1,500 communities in 51 countries who are members of the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. In the Nordic region, there are 12 member-cities: Oslo, Trondheim, Esbjerg, Gothenburg, Uppsala, Hallstahammar, Stockholm, Gävle, Östersund, Tampere, Turku and Reykjavik. Another member in addition to this is the Centre for an Age-Friendly Norway (Senteret for et aldersvennlig Norge). The Nordic cities in the network actively share their best practices of how to create cities that are economically, socially, and culturally inclusive for an ageing population.

[Read more about age-friendly cities](#) and learn some examples of how Nordic countries are working to involve elderly people in creating local environments for all ages as well as changing the narrative about ageing.



## Becoming old in a high-speed society

The Danish Gerontological Society held its annual national conference on ageing and society on November 2–3 2023.

The theme of the conference, 'Becoming old in a forced time', was chosen based on a curiosity about how the high level of tempo that we experience in our societies impacts older people who in many ways live parallel to the high-speed society. The German philosopher Hartmut Rosa and his theories of social acceleration and resonance furthermore served as inspiration for the theme.

About 120 delegates attended the conference, coming from research institutes, university colleges, eldercare in the municipalities, private organisations and universities. Many contributed with symposia and oral presentations, and most presentations covered various aspects of time and ageing.

The theme was explored from different theoretical perspectives by the keynote speakers. Professor of Systematic Theology, Niels Henrik Gregersen, University of Copenhagen, gave a spiritual perspective reflecting on how resonance may appear when you age in a forced time; Ethnologist and PhD Aske Juul Lassen, University of Copenhagen, contributed with reflections about how the experience of time changes in the transition from work life to retirement; and Anthropologist and PhD, Ida Marie Lind Glavind, Alzheimerforeningen (eng. The Alzheimer's Association) presented a qualitative study of how people with dementia can experience to be 'out of sync' with time. The presentation of medical doctor Finn Rønholt evolved around the role of geriatrics in the Danish health care system and the historical development of long-term medicine to acute geriatrics, and Anna Amillon, senior researcher at The Danish Center for Social Science Research,

asked the question of whether a good life as an older person is an active life, based on data from the Danish Longitudinal Study of Ageing.

It is not possible to cover all presentations here but the following selection may give an impressions of the width and scope of topics and contributors: Associate Professor Emeritus Runar Bakken, University of South-Eastern Norway, gave an empirically based lecture about how the meaning of home increases with age and is affected by the rhythm of time and life we live in and by; the psychologists Morten Hedelund and Biretha Hougaard, the Municipality of Copenhagen presented a study showing a high rate of suicide among elderly people aged +65 years but also a potential to strengthen the competencies of health professionals to prevent suicides among elderly people; Associate Professor Anne Liveng, University of Roskilde, discussed the conditions of care in relation to Rosa's theory of the high-speed society; Professor Paolo Caserotti and colleagues from the University of Southern Denmark showed how complex interventions may enhance changes in lifestyle among physically inactive elderly people and thus preventing a range of health problems; based on new reports Kari Rose Holm and Loa Christensen, Videnscenter for værdig ældrepleje (VVÆ), the Danish Health Authority and Professor Lone Grøn, The Danish Center for Social Science Research, invited the audience to reflect on time as a crucial factor in good elder care and in a good life for elderly people.

All in all a great conference offering rich opportunities for inspiration for participants from all parts of the gerontological field.

[Go here to find the presentations from the conference \(in Danish\)](#)



## 'Circle of Couples'

Group interventions in Finland offer tailored support for older couples at the early stage of dementia.

The Circle of Couples is an empowering group intervention for older couples at the early stages of dementia. Circle of Couples is launched and run by the Finnish Association for the Welfare of Older Adults. According to a randomized controlled trial done in Finland during 2011-2014 the Circle of Couples group model promoted the quality of life of spouses and improved cognition of PWD without increasing total costs. A Circle of Couples group consists of around eight older couples (8 people with dementia and 8 spouses). The group has eight weekly meetings during a period of two months. The group consists of three parallel group processes and the group process is facilitated by four trained facilitators who lean on client-centered approach, goal-orientation, empowerment, peer support and tailored information.

A recent thesis studied a sample of participants (n=110) who participated in Circle of Couples groups during 2020-2021 and who completed an anonymous postal survey before and Circle of Couples group. The response rate was 86 before the group and 53 after the group. The average age was 76 years. The participants expected to receive peer support and gain relevant information about early-stage dementia.

The participants' life satisfaction had positive correlation with meeting other people, sense of security and satisfaction with relationships. Peer support,

tailored group content, gaining new friends and ventilating feelings towards both dementia and relationship as a couple were associated with participants' life satisfaction. The Circle of Couples group and its key component of three parallel group processes enabled ventilating feelings about diagnosis, worries related to future individually. The Circle of Couples group also helped older couples to ventilate experiences related to the diagnosis and make plans towards the future together as a couple. The Circle of Couples group also increased hope, fostered a sense of continuity and self-management skills with dementia.

[Find out more about the Circle of Couples group model at this special website](#)

[Go here to watch videos about the intervention with English subtitles](#)



New digital platform and course addresses low literacy among elderly people in a playful and meaningful way

The Low Literacy at Play (LOLit) project has been developed by [Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing](#), [Reading and Writing Foundation](#), [University of Copenhagen](#), [University of Coimbra](#), and [A19.pt](#). The project is supported by [Erasmus+](#) (a program of the European Union).

Around 24 to 40 million older Europeans struggle with low literacy, which is often coupled with limited digital skills. Low literacy correlates with negative health behaviors, poor well-being, and decreased societal engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these disparities, causing heightened stress, loneliness, and health risks. Many seniors with low literacy are hesitant to learn, often seeing issues like anxiety, communication problems, and social isolation as the primary concerns. Traditional educational approaches have failed to motivate them, highlighting the need for personalized learning methods based on previous experiences to boost self-confidence and engagement.

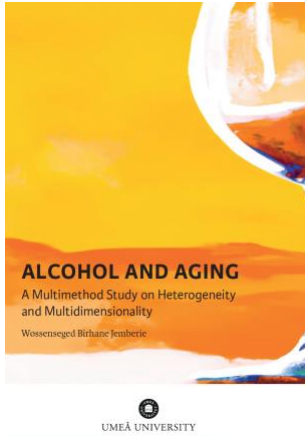
In 2022 the Low Literacy at Play (LOLit) project started with the aim to address this gap by focusing on the learning needs of older individuals with low literacy and therewith reduce socio-economic disparities. The project had three main objectives: developing a flexible learning approach for older adults, providing tools for disadvantaged seniors to access information effectively, and raise awareness among adult education professionals.

A new course was created – based on meaningful play - with six to eight thematic sessions using digital and face-to-face methods to enhance self-confidence, basic skills, and knowledge of older adults. The content of the course was co-created with

the target group, incorporating source materials to address their learning needs. Social gatherings and collaborative learning are the central focus throughout the course and foster self-confidence and social relations. The approach emphasizes "learning by stealth" and collaborative learning through meaningful play principles and social media learning.

On LOLit platform, professionals and volunteers in adult/senior education can download the course materials and follow a train-the-trainer to learn how to organize the course themselves. The platform and materials are available in Deutch, Portuguese, English and Danish.

[Go here to learn more.](#)



## ***Recent doctoral dissertation***

# **Alcohol and aging: a multimethod study on heterogeneity and multidimensionality**

By Wossenseged Birhane Jemberie, Umeå University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social Work.

Source: [umu.diva-portal.org](http://umu.diva-portal.org)

**Background and Objectives:** With an ageing population, the number of older persons with substance use problems, particularly problematic alcohol use, is increasing. Despite growing recognition of the negative consequences of problematic alcohol use on older persons, there is a dearth of knowledge about the alcohol use profiles and the dimensionality of alcohol problems in older people. Moreover, little is known about older persons' experiences and perspectives on alcohol use in relation to their ageing and their personal goals regarding treatment and recovery. This thesis aimed to (i) describe the characteristics of older persons who accessed municipal substance use treatment and care services (addiction services) and to investigate their future hospitalization; (ii) examine the heterogeneity and multidimensionality of problematic alcohol use among older persons; and (iii) to shed light on the experiences and perspectives of older persons regarding ageing, alcohol problems and recovery.

**Methods:** For studies I-III, municipal Addiction Severity Index (ASI) assessment data (between 2003 and 2017) from adults aged 50 years and older were used to select the study samples. Generalized linear regression models investigated hospitalization related outcomes among 3624 older persons in Study-I. In Study-II, a latent class analysis was applied on ASI data from 1747 individuals with alcohol problems. Study-III linked the ASI data from Study-II to hospital discharge and mortality data forming time-to-repeated-event dataset; Andersen-Gill regression model with a robust variance estimator was used for the analysis. Study-IV applied qualitative content analysis on interview data from ten older persons recruited from a specialist outpatient clinic for alcohol treatment.

**Results:** Nearly three-fourth of older persons assessed for substance use severity at municipal addiction services were later hospitalized (Study-I). Individuals diagnosed

with substance use disorders, psychiatric or dual diagnoses had more cumulative hospitalized days, higher rates of hospital readmissions, and shorter time to first admission following an initial ASI assessment at municipal addiction services (Study-I). Five distinct groups of older persons with comparable alcohol problem severity but with variation in onset age, psychiatric comorbidities, polysubstance use, social support and gender composition were identified (Study-II). The five groups varied in risks of repeated hospitalizations due to substance use and psychiatric disorders (Study-III). Older persons experienced their ageing and alcohol use having a dynamic interplay (Study-IV). They needed to constantly negotiate with their environment to maintain a positive ageing trajectory. They perceived moderate alcohol use fosters healthy ageing, but over time, experienced their alcohol use as unsustainable and a threat to their pursuit of healthy ageing. Stigma and ambivalence delayed treatment seeking (Study-IV). They accessed treatment programs which respected their preferences and autonomy, engaged them in goal setting and strengthened their agency. After reducing their alcohol use, positive changes in their biopsychosocial functioning encouraged them to continue their recovery journey even in the presence of setbacks (Study-IV).

**Conclusion:** Most older persons who access municipal addiction services are hospitalized repeatedly. Many older persons with alcohol problems live with medical and psychiatric comorbidities suggesting multiple care needs from health and social care services. Incorporating older persons' desire for healthy ageing into alcohol treatment plan can facilitate treatment engagement and recovery. Many older persons aim to moderate their alcohol consumption. Clinicians can deliver person-centered care for older persons, by considering their heterogeneity in treatment goals, biopsychosocial functioning, and available resources. A multidimensional identification of alcohol use profiles could improve treatment by establishing the variation in alcohol problems among older treatment seekers. Older persons stay engaged in alcohol treatment programs which value their experiences and expertise, incorporate their personal treatment and life goals, respect their autonomy and agency, and involve them as active participants. Sensitizing service providers on old age substance use problems could provide multiple points of contact for screening of older persons and earlier referral to treatment. A streamlined data sharing within and between health and social care services fosters timely and equitable care and facilitates an integrated and person-centered care across the continuum.

[Learn more and download the full thesis](#)





New newsletter from Nasjonalt senter for aldring og helse (*The Norwegian National Centre for Ageing and Health*) in Norway

“Hev kompetansen” offers inspiration for professionals four times a year.

The newsletter offers information about courses, conferences, e-learning and more within elder care. [Find out more and sign up.](#)



*Nordisk välfärdsforskning | Nordic Welfare Research* publishes about recent developments in elder care

The open access journal is published by Universitetsforlaget AS (*Scandinavian University Press*) and the Norwegian research foundation Fafo, on behalf of the Nordic Welfare Center.

The demand for labor force and competencies are creating challenges for the welfare societies in all the Nordic countries. In this issue, the articles discuss questions about the development of the welfare services, the services in the municipalities, the role of the users in shaping services and of new ways of organising and managing welfare services.

[Learn more and read the articles](#)

# The executive committee and NGF representatives

## Executive committee

Jette Thuesen: President, Danish Gerontological Society

Carin Lennartsson: 1. Vice president, Karolinska Institutet & Swedish Gerontological Society

Steinunn Þórðardóttir: 2. Vice president, The Icelandic Geriatrics Society

Pia Kannegaard: Secretary General of the 26NKG, Danish Society for Geriatrics

## Representatives from the member organizations

### Denmark

Danish Gerontological Society (Dansk Gerontologisk Selskab): Jette Thuesen

Danish Society for Geriatrics (Dansk Selskab for Geriatri): Pia Nimann Kannegaard

### Finland

Societas Gerontologica Fennica: Mikaela von Bonsdorff

Finnish Geriatricians (Suomen Geriatri ry - Finlands Geriatriker rf): Esa Jämsen

Finnish Society for Growth and Ageing Research (Kasvun ja vanhenemisen tutkijat ry - Föreningen för forskning i uppväxt och åldrande): Linda Enroth

### Iceland

The Icelandic Gerontological Society (Öldrunarfræðafélag Íslands): Sírý Sif Sigurlaugardóttir & Sigrún Huld Þorgrímsdóttir

The Icelandic Geriatrics Society (Félag Íslenskra Öldrunarlækna): Steinunn Þórðardóttir

### Norway

Norwegian Society for Aging Research (Norsk selskap for aldersforskning): Vegard Skirbekk

Norwegian Geriatrics Association (Norsk geriatriisk förening): Nils Holand

### Sweden

Swedish Gerontological Society (Sveriges Gerontologiska Sällskap): Cristina Joy Torgé

Swedish Geriatrics Society (Svensk Geriatriisk Förening): Peter Nordström

## Secretary and treasurer

Louise Scheel Thomasen.

### The editorial staff of the GeroNord

Jette Thuesen, President, and Louise Scheel Thomasen, Secretary

[contact@ngf-geronord.se](mailto:contact@ngf-geronord.se)