

# Foreword

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We are very pleased to be able to present this thematic issue of *Hygiea Internationalis* which features studies of infant mortality in the Nordic countries. Texts are included from Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, the results of a Nordic project.

The introductory article by Anders Brändström, Sören Edvinsson and John Rogers draws together some of the main trends. At the same time the individual survey articles provides us with syntheses on the national levels: Brändström, Edvinsson and Rogers on Sweden, Ólöf Garðarsdóttir and Loftur Guttormsson on Iceland, and Gunnar Thorvaldsen on Norway. Magdalena Bengtsson presents a detailed study of the development of cause of death among infants in Sweden, while Eli Fure gives us insight into the use of computer analysis in studies of infant mortality in her methodological contribution.

National studies of infant mortality have been with us for some years, but it is only more recently that attempts have begun to be made to present syntheses of research results that have been produced. If our research and local studies are to have further value, then it is important to reach beyond national borders, to see how regions cut across political boundaries and how various regions of Europe exhibited similarities and differences. This issue is an important step in reaching a more unified understanding of the developments in the Nordic countries.

One of the features of this issue is the visual experience provided by the extensive maps. The opportunities now available in this respect allow the use of maps as an analytical tool in ways not previously available. We are only beginning to explore the possibilities here.

During the next few weeks, we will be changing the composition of our editorial group. While I will be taking over the primary responsibility for the journal, Peter Berkesand will continue as our technical editor. His new position with Linköping University Electronic Press ensures both the production of the journal, as well as participation in the new developments associated within the field. We are also hoping soon to be able to add an administrative assistant to our ranks.

Developments within the field of electronic publications, to say the least, are occurring at a pace that not many of us could have imagined just a few years ago.

Therefore, it is very important that we reconsider the ways in which this journal operates. Of course, we want to present quality work on the pages of the journal. At the same time, the mere presentation of articles alone does not fully utilize the potential of this medium. The question that we have is how could the journal be used in a more innovative way? This is where our readers come in. What ideas and suggestions do you have about how the journal could be developed? Let us know what thoughts and ideas you have. How would you like to see a medium of this kind used? Please contact either Peter Berkesand or me at the addresses listed on the main page of the International Network for the History of Public Health.

Finally, the next issue of our journal will contain papers from the 2001 combined conference held in Norrköping, Sweden and will focus on occupational health. This thematic issue will include presentations from several parts of the globe.

We hope to hear from our readers. Send us your ideas.