

Nordic Gerontological Federation

GeroNord

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

Volume 23, no 1-4, 2014

23NKG2016
23RD NORDIC CONGRESS OF
GERONTOLOGY
TAMPERE • FINLAND

On behalf of the Nordic Gerontological Federation we invite you to share with your colleagues the most recent findings, ideas and innovations about ageing. Our ageing society urgently needs scientific knowledge to enable longer lives to reach their full potential. Better ageing means a better society for all. The theme of the congress is therefore 'Good ageing – better society'.

The Nordic congresses traditionally emphasise multidisciplinary perspectives on ageing and the life course. 23 NKG is a meeting place for all researchers and professionals, whether they are in social sciences, health research, medicine, nursing, biology, humanities, services research or any other field of scientific enquiry. Our special aim is to create sessions at which experts from different disciplines can meet and learn from each other.

The congress will be held June 19-22, 2016 in Tampere, Finland. 23 NKG is also a place for meeting old and new friends, for enjoying the conference's social programme, Finnish nature and Tampere's many cultural attractions.

We look forward to meeting you in Tampere in June 2016!

Visit our website: www.23nkg.fi

Deadline for abstracts is February 27, 2016, End of early bird registration March 15, 2016

Scientific programme: scientific.secretary@23nkg.fi

What is NGF all about?

This is a question that remains following a biannual congress. Our congresses truly represent the peak events of NGF. Here we are offered unique opportunities to meet across disciplines to share ideas and research findings and to discuss how to this knowledge can be implemented in society. Last but not least, meeting colleagues is per se important and a productive investment. Noteworthy, the Nordic identity often makes us feel at home independent of the country for an NGF congress. In this respect the Nordic congresses are unique and of great importance in bringing us together over national borders, something we all need to care about and take responsibilities for. The congresses are also important in bringing us together to demonstrate the international strength of Nordic gerontology. Although we are a small Nordic community in terms of numbers we can at the same time experience the greatness in strength and quality of multidisciplinary gerontology when we summarize all ongoing activities across our five countries.

Age Well - 22nd Nordic Congress

The total number of participants at 22nkg in Gothenburg was more than 1000 (exactly 1097). (We can compare this with an annual GSA (Gerontological Society of America) meeting that often assembles 3-4000, which make it possible to draw the conclusion that we are relatively well off in terms of numbers. There were 282 who participated only during the FoU-day. In total we received more than 600 abstracts.

The program comprised 4 plenary lectures (Arvid Carlsson, James Vaupel, Ingmar Skoog, and Anders Ekholm) and 2 lectures by the winners of the prestigious Sohlberg Prize (Timo Strandberg) and the new prize for a Nordic promising researcher (Sari Stenholm). In addition, there were 12 state-of-the art sessions, 51 symposia, 12 sessions with oral posters and 10 sessions with thematic oral presentations. The oral poster sessions was a new feature at a Nordic congress and allowed both a poster that was exposed during the entire congress and a brief oral presentation. I hope that this format will be kept for future congresses.

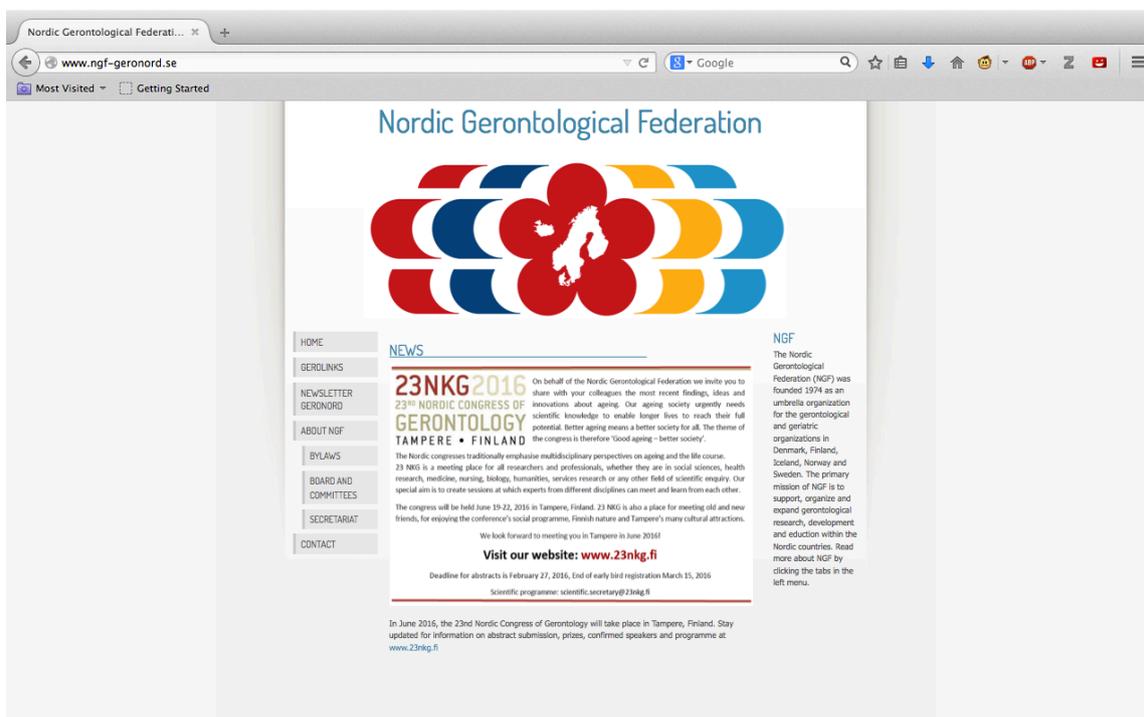
Having organized a congress you become well aware of all the details that must be taken care of in arranging a successful congress. The most important is to attend to the mission of NGF which means to organize a meeting that offers sessions allowing in-depth disciplinary foci and at the same time is characterized by multidisciplinary inquiries. The motto we had in the planning of 22nkg was "everyone should find something attractive all the time". This made us to balance between the risk of too few and too many parallel sessions/activities, something that is hard to predict beforehand whether it will work or not. Although it is a lot of work it is also very reinforcing in terms of all the contacts you have to establish and new aspects to consider. A professional PCO is necessary, and we were therefore chocked when Congrex made bankruptcy 8 month before the dates of the congress. We were happy, however, to find a new and competent PCO in due time to save the congress. There were some shaky and nervous weeks I have to admit, something I really don't hope that the organizers of the next congress should experience.

Next congress – 23 nkg

The planning for the 23rd Nordic congress in Tampere, Finland 2016, with the theme “*Good Ageing – Better Society*” is now well underway. Make sure that you reserve the dates well in advance, June 19–22. Also, keep you informed in checking out for more detailed information on the home page: www.23nkg.fi. We wish good luck to Marja Jylhä as president and Kirsi Lumme-Sandt as Secretary General in their planning for another successful Nordic Gerontology Congress.

Homepage – our window to the world

Our NGF secretary Anna Siverskog is regularly updating our home page www.ngf-geronord.se. Make sure to check the home page and use it to share ideas and activities that you consider to be of interest among colleagues. We have added some valuable links to various gerontological organizations and institutions. Make sure that we have included your organization or institute!



Merry X-mas & Happy New Year

Boo Johansson, president of NGF

Content of this issue	
Words from the president	p. 1-2
NGF Prize Winners for 2014	p. 3-7
Nyheter från DSG	p. 8
New PhD	p. 9
Upcoming events: Course on dementia	p. 10
Upcoming events: Tema Äldrefattigdom	p. 11
Upcoming conferences	p. 12



Two prestigious prizes in gerontology were awarded at the 22 NKG Congress in Gothenburg in this year. The first is the great Nordic prize in Gerontology, the Sohlberg prize, that is given to an active scientist who is a leader in the development of a field in aging research. Professor Timo Strandberg from Helsinki, Finland was unanimously chosen by the jury for this prize. The second prize, the NGF Prize for promising researchers in gerontology, was awarded out for the first time this year. The receiver of the prize is Sari Stenholm from Turku, Finland.

Professor Strandberg and Dr. Stenholm received their prizes at the opening ceremony of the 22 NKG Congress, and they gave honorary lectures. Below you can read some more information about the prize winners' research. Geronord also asked them some questions about their reactions and plans for the prize.

Timo Strandberg - Winner of the Sohlberg Prize

Professor Strandberg has served as the full professor of geriatric medicine at the University of Oulu for the last seven years but is now moving to a new assignment as the full professor of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Helsinki and the Physician-in-Chief at Helsinki University Hospital. From 2013 he serves as acting president of the European Union Geriatric Medicine Society (EUGMS).

Professor Strandberg's primary field of interest has been lipid metabolism and its relevance to vascular diseases. Recently he has concentrated on six main topics: 1) successful aging (the quality of life in the late adulthood, the paradoxes of the old age), 2) geriatric syndromes (frailty, connections to vascular diseases), 3) telomeres and risk factors, 4) the special features of cholesterol metabolism in the late adulthood, 5) neurodegenerative diseases (dementia, risk factors and characterization) and 6) the new risk markers for vascular diseases.

Geronord: You have worked for some time now within gerontology and geriatrics. What initially brought you into the field of ageing?

Timo: I was attracted to the field of geriatrics when specializing in internal medicine at the end of 1980's by my mentor and friend Professor Reijo Tilvis. He was the first professor of geriatrics at the University of Helsinki. I specialized in geriatrics in 1993.



Geronord: One of the fields that you are concentrating in is successful ageing, and “Ageing Well” was also the theme for the NGF Conference this year. How do you yourself define successful ageing?

Timo: Successful ageing, or Active and Healthy Ageing (AHA) as it is currently being named in Europe is of course a multifaceted concept involving not only physical but also psychological and social aspects. Resilience or adaptive ability is important in old age when chronic diseases nevertheless are frequent. I would have a more definite answer in 2015 when we have European consensus, perhaps.

Geronord: How did you react when you were notified that you received the prize?

Timo: I was very happy. It is great honour of course, especially when the prize comes from your own Nordic colleagues.

Geronord: Please describe your prize lecture during the congress.

Timo: The title was something like “How to live up to 100 years without regretting it”. I aimed to describe various life course factors contributing to active and healthy ageing, a very hot topic in ageing societies. My own research has been related to it very much.

The Sohlberg prize

The Sohlberg prize most prestigious Nordic Prize in Gerontology. The prize of € 10.000 is sponsored by the Päivikki and Sakari Sohlberg Foundation. 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 is very well received and when it is announced every second year, many nominations of excellent researchers have been sent in.

Geronord: What are your plans for the prize? What issues would you still like to explore in the future?

Timo: We have pipe renovation going on at home, so there are no difficulties in pending the prize. I plan to explore further especially cardiovascular contributions to active and healthy ageing. Effects of both lifestyle and drug treatments. Cholesterol has been my favorite research topic for a long time and ongoing. A newer area is frailty in old age: What are risk factors and how to prevent it.

Geronord: What are your hobbies, or what do you enjoy in your free time?

Timo: Seems that my free time and work are intimately related, I like to read and think. Exercise is very practical, walking in the city etc.

Interview by Joy Torgé

Sari Stenholm - Winner of NGF's prize for promising researcher in gerontology

Sari Stenholm is 36 years of age. In 2007 she defended her PhD dissertation on "Obesity as a risk factor for walking limitation on older Finnish men and women. Mediating factors, long-term risk and coexisting conditions" at the University of Jyväskylä.

Following her PhD graduation, she became a visiting post-doctoral fellow for two years at NIA, Clinical Research Branch in Baltimore, and subsequently a post-doctoral researcher at the National Institute for Health and Welfare and the University of Turku. Today she holds a position as senior researcher at the University of Turku. She has been a member of several scientific working groups and an expert reviewer for several scientific journals.

Geronord: You were quite young when you finished your PhD. What got you into gerontology as a young researcher? Have you always been interested in ageing issues?

Sari: We all get old at some point and for me the most interesting aspect of gerontology is the aging process itself and factors that influence it. During my research career I've been interested in modifiable risk factors and prognostic factors for functional decline and disability. Understanding these factors and influencing them early enough is important to prevent functional decline and to help older people to maintain their functioning.

Geronord: How did you react when you were notified that you received the prize?

Sari: There were many good candidates for this prize, so of course I was honored to be chosen as the prize winner. For me it was also a great message that the research I've conducted is considered important. I really appreciate the recognition, especially because this was the first time when the prize was awarded.

Geronord: Please describe your prize lecture during the congress.

In my presentation entitled "Obesity as a lifetime danger - evidence from the longitudinal aging studies" I shared findings from my studies over the years, covered different subtypes of obesity and their functional consequences. I focused on obesity from the point of view of fat distribution, metabolic syndrome, sarcopenic obesity and duration of obesity. The research shows that although overweight may be slightly protective from premature death among older adults obesity, especially combined with low muscle strength, is associated with poorer functioning. In addition,



obesity in midlife and long-lasting obesity are strong predictors of functional limitations and mortality in old age implying that weight gain earlier in life can have far-reaching consequences.

Geronord: What are your plans for the prize? What issues would you like to explore in the future?

Sari: I used part of the prize for a research visit to the National Institute on Aging in Bethesda, USA in fall 2014. I conducted my postdoc fellowship at NIA in 2007-2009 and I've been collaborating with NIA's researchers ever since. It is always very refreshing and inspiring to visit them, generate new research ideas and write papers together.

I have recently launched a new project related to health behavioral changes around retirement transition. Retirement is an important life event and it can either have positive or negative impact on health behavior and consequently on future health and functioning. I am very excited about this project and it has been fruitful to incorporate my knowledge about aging with occupational medicine.

Geronord: Lastly, what are your hobbies, or what do you enjoy in your free time?

Sari: We have a 4-year old son and our family likes to spend time together outdoors which usually means playing, biking and hiking together. On my spare time, i.e. early mornings and late evenings, I am a triathlete. Swimming, biking and running offers great counterbalance for sitting hours at the office. Training for Ironman distance events (swim 3.8km, bike 180km and run 42.2 km) has taught me perseverance and commitment, both of which also help me at my work. ☘

NGF prize for promising researcher

The NGF prize for promising researcher in gerontology was handed out for the first time this year at the 22 NKG congress in Gothenburg, Sweden. The prize is intended for researchers that do not hold a senior position, but preferably have concluded a PhD. Candidates are nominated from the country that will host the next Nordic Congress of Gerontology. Thus, as the next congress in 2016 is in Tampere, a Finnish researcher received the prize this year. The prize is 20.000 SEK.

Interview by Joy Torgé

Første nationale konference om aldring og samfund

2. - 3. oktober afholdt Dansk Gerontologisk Selskab (DGS) konferencen *Rehabilitering - når livet skal leves hele livet?* Det var startskuddet for *National konference om aldring og samfund*, som fremover vil være en årligt tilbagevendende og central aktivitet i selskabets virke. Konferencen samlede 182 forskere, uddannelsesfolk og praktikere fra kommuner og regioner til debat om det højaktuelle emne *rehabilitering* ud fra mange forskellige perspektiver: Økonomiske, historiske, politiske, sociologiske og ældre-perspektiver. Både plenum-forelæsninger og 50 præsentationer i parallelle sessioner og symposier gav anledning til livlige diskussioner om alt fra socialpolitiske perspektiver på rehabilitering til, hvad høretab betyder for ældre menneskers samfundsmæssige deltagelse.

Rehabilitering fremstår i Danmark som en vigtig brik i det puslespil af social- og sundhedsfaglige indsatser, der fremover skal understøtte ældres trivsel ved svækkelse. Fra næste år bliver rehabilitering en integreret del af hjemmehjælpen, hvilket skyldes den politiske aftale om "Fremtidens Hjemmehjælp", der blev indgået i juni. Aftalen indikerer et igangværende skift fra en kompenserende til en mere aktiverende tilgang til svækkelse, som - selv om den ikke er ny - har særlig vind i sejlene disse år.

Nyindstiftet pris til Kirsten Avlunds minde - tildelt Aske Juul Lassen

På konferencen uddeltes for første gang Kirsten Avlund Prisen, som er indstiftet af DGS. Kirsten Avlund, en af Danmarks førende aldringsforskere, døde sidste år 1. september, alt for tidligt og midt i karrieren. Donationer fra Kirsten Avlunds familie og fra Ældre Sagen har gjort det muligt at uddele 10.000 de næste 5 år. Prisen blev i år uddelt til etnolog, ph.d. Aske Juul Lassen, Center for Sund Aldring ved Københavns Universitet. Prisen blev givet for forskningens relevans, for Aske Juul Lassens evne og vilje til at formidle - også i folkelige sammenhænge, og for hans evne og vilje til at samarbejde på tværs af fag og videnskabelige discipliner. Aske kvitterede for prisen med en forelæsning om aktiv aldring; hvordan aktiv aldring er opstået og implementeret i europæisk politik - og hvordan aktiv aldring forhandles og tillægges betydning i ældre menneskers hverdagsliv.



Se Askes prisforelæsning <http://gerodan.dk/>

For nærmere oplysninger: Kontakt DGS' forkvinde Tine Rostgaard, mail: tr@dps.aau.dk eller næst-ditto Jette Thuesen, mail: thuesen@sdu.dk

Magnus Broström disputerade 16 maj på sin avhandling *Äldre människors föreställningar om den egna framtiden, döendet och döden* (Older People's Thoughts and Reflections about their own future, death and dying) vid Linköpings universitet.



Syftet med avhandlingen är att utforska äldre människors föreställningar om och förhållningssätt till den egna framtiden, döendet och döden. Det är ämnen som hittills har fått begränsad uppmärksamhet. En bakomliggande orsak till detta är att äldreforskning och dödsforskning sällan har förenats. Dessutom synliggörs äldres döende och död nästan inte alls i offentlig debatt, trots att ålderdomen är den fas i livet då döden normalt inträffar. Studien bygger på kvalitativa intervjuer med 27 äldre kvinnor och män i åldrarna 70–91 år, vilka alla bodde i ordinarie boende och betraktade sig själva som relativt friska. Genomförande, analys och tolkning av intervjuerna har utgått från ett livslöppsperspektiv, där både en abduktiv och en hermeneutisk ansats tillämpades. I analys och tolkning framkom kontrasterande mönster i de intervjuades funderingar på den egna framtiden och döden, i deras samtal med någon om döden, i deras erfarenheter av döende och död, och i vad de trodde hände efter döden. Resultaten visar också att funderingar och agerande inför en krympande framtid utgjorde centrala inslag i de äldres vardag och att de intervjuade laborerade med olika tidshorisonter. Ett annat resultat handlar vad som är rätt tidpunkt i livet för att fundera på döden, samtala med andra om döden, för att planera inför döden och för ett "efter döden". Det är en komplex bild av äldres föreställningar om den egna framtiden, döendet och döden som framkommit, där teman som åldersmönster, ett förlängt livslöpp, ansvar, kontroll och värdighet är centrala inslag. Avhandlingens resultat kan bidra till en bättre förståelse för äldre människors situation i ljuset av en krympande framtid, döende och död.

The aim of the dissertation is to explore older people's thoughts and conceptions about their own future, death and dying. It is an academic field that, to date, has received limited attention. One reason for this is that gerontology and thanatology has rarely worked together. The discussion is also absent from public debate. At the same time, advanced age is normally the time when death occurs. The study is based on qualitative interviews with 27 older women and men, aged 70–91, all of whom lived in ordinary housing and who regarded themselves as being in good health. The research process, in all phases, adopted a lifecourse perspective, and both abductive and hermeneutic analytic tools were used. The analysis and the interpretations revealed contrasting patterns regarding whether the participants thought about their future and death, had conversations about these subjects, whether they had previous experience related to dying and death, and their ideas about what happens after death. The results indicated that reflections about and actions to handle a diminishing future were central elements in the everyday life of the participants, who experimented with various time horizons. A key pattern concerned what was "the right time" for reflections about death, and for the planning of arrangements related to death. A complex overall picture of older people's conceptions about their future, death and dying emerged in the results, where age patterns, a prolonged life course, responsibility, control and dignity were central themes. The results may contribute to a better understanding of older people's existential situation, in the face of a diminishing future, death and dying.

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Week 3: The Role of Family and the Home Environment

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The Massive Open Online Course is sponsored by the Center for Innovative Care in Aging at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing.



Health professionals and students, family caregivers, friends of and affected individuals, and others interested in learning about dementia and quality care will benefit from completing this interprofessional online 5-week course. Led by Drs. Nancy Hodgson and Laura Gitlin, participants will acquire foundational knowledge in the care of persons with Alzheimer’s disease and other neurocognitive disorders.

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Time commitment: 3-6 hours work / week



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Participants’ Voices:

“Thank you for the course. I appreciate it so much. We have to pay for the most basic information in South Africa. Now I will be able to help others who cannot afford the resources.”

(Participant from Howick, KSN, South Africa)

“The information and resources you have given to us are priceless and I can only imagine how many lives you’ve helped with your words and works. Personally, I now know many ways in which I can be a better support person to my in-laws. For this I sincerely and gratefully thank you.”

(Participant from Georgetown, Massachusetts)

“Thank you for this wonderful and informative course you have offered. I learned so much from this course that I will never learn from the four corners of a classroom. This is my first time to try a MOOC class and at first I am in doubt but later on I enjoyed learning in a different way than reading a book from the library. As a healthcare professional in the Philippines, I find your topics new and very informative.”

(Participant from Marulas, Valenzuela City, Metro Manila Philippines)





GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

Tema Äldrefattigdom I mötet mellan nydisputerad och senior forskare

Ett arrangemang i samarbete mellan Sveriges Gerontologiska Sällskap och Institutionen för socialt arbete, Göteborgs universitet

Fredagen den 27 februari 2015, kl. 13.30-15:30

Medverkande: Fil. dr Angelika Thelin och Professor Björn Gustafsson



Angelika Thelin är universitetslektor vid Linnéuniversitetet och disputerade 2013 på en kvalitativ avhandling om äldrefattigdom. Björn Gustafsson är professor i socialt arbete vid Göteborgs universitet och har omfattande erfarenhet av kvantitativ forskning kring fattigdom, bland annat med fokus på äldre personer.



Under seminariet ger Björn Gustafsson en överblick kring forskning kring fattigdom bland äldre och Angelika Thelin presenterar sin avhandling *Äldrefattigdom: Ekonomisk utsatthet i yngre ålderspensionärers vardag*. Tillsammans diskuterar de sedan avhandlingens kunskapsbidrag.

Efter seminariet bjuds det på fika!

Plats: Institutionen för socialt arbete, konferensrum Pilen, Pilgatan 19A, 3e våningen, Göteborg

Seminariet är avgiftsfritt men anmälan krävs senast den 13 februari.

[Anmäl dig genom att klicka här!](#)

Frågor ställs via e-post: info@sgs.nu eller besök SGS webbsida www.sgs.nu där du också kan bli medlem i SGS!

IAGG-ER 8th Congress

The International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics

Unlocking the Demographic Dividend

23-26 April 2014, Dublin, Ireland

<http://www.iaggdublin2015.org/>

Ageing Families, Changing Families: An International Conference

3-6 June 2015, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

<http://asi.syr.edu/event/agingfamilies2015/>

GSA Annual Scientific Meeting 2015

Gerontological Society of America

18-22 November, 2015, Orlando, FL, USA

<https://www.geron.org/meetings-events/gsa-annual-scientific-meeting/future-meetings>

Share your activities!

GeroNord, and the website for NGF, are resources for the members within the member organization of NGF, aiming to work as a platform for news in the gerontological area. This is however based on the members to share news, activities and events. Therefore, we would like to encourage you to send information to us about new PhD's, upcoming seminars, conferences, books, courses, education and other activities within your member organizations. We would like you to use these resources as ways to spread information to the many persons working within the gerontological field that are reached by this newsletter.

The website is currently containing basic information about NGF but can also be used as a resource for spreading information about your activities. We would like your ideas and thoughts about what you wish to see on the website, and if you submit material for GeroNord, we are happy to share this on the website too if you wish.

Anna Siverskog, Secretary of NGF

The board of Nordic Gerontological Federation:

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Editorial staff of GeroNord

Boo Johansson (boo.johansson@psy.gu.se)

Anna Siverskog (anna.siverskog@liu.se)

NGF

c/o NISAL, Linköpings universitet/ISV

SE-601 74 Norrköping

Sweden

NGF's website is: <http://www.ngf-geronord.se/>

**The editorial staff of
GeroNord wishes
you a merry
Christmas and
happy New Year!**

