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Niels Keiding

Notes on the establishment of the Nordic Region of The Biometric Society

What follows are some scattered pieces of information from my files about the early history of the Nordic Region of what is now called The International Biometric Society.

In the late 1970s there were so-called National Groups in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and in addition members 'at large' in Iceland and Finland. Nordic statisticians had been meeting roughly every second year since 1965, where the first Nordic Meeting of Mathematical Statisticians was organized in Århus at the initiative of Ole E. Barndorff-Nielsen. (In addition, and practically independent of this, Nordic official statisticians had, and still have, their own regular meetings).

In September 1979 the Swedish National Secretary, Paul Seeger, raised the idea of closer collaboration between the Nordic members of The Biometric Society. A general discussion was held at the Nordic Meeting of Mathematical Statistics in Mariehamn in May 1980 and a working group consisting of Niels Keiding and Aage Vølund (DK) , Timo Hakulinen and Markko Nurminen (SF), Emil Spjøtvoll and Steinar Tretli (N) and Gunnar Kulldorff and Paul Seeger (S) edited a letter to the members recommending the formation of a Nordic region.

As a result of discussions in the four countries, as well as Iceland, an interim committee consisting of

Holmgeir Björnsson (IS)

Timo Hakulinen (SF)

Paul Seeger (S), secretary and treasurer

Lars Strand (N)

Aage Vølund (DK), president

wrote on 16 June 1981 to Biometric Society President R. M. Cormack proposing the establishment of the Nordic Region. On 7 May 1982 the secretary of The Biometric Society, Lyle D. Calvin, informed the interim committee that the Council of The Biometric Society had approved The Nordic Region unanimously.

The first meeting was a half-day session within the framework of the Nordic Meeting of Mathematical Statistics in Aalborg in June 1982.

An open meeting of members held in Aalborg on 10 June 1982 approved that the interim committee, together with Council members Jon Stene (DK) and Hans Wedel (S), acted as board for the rest of 1982 and organized election of a board to take office from the beginning of 1983.

The interim committee was elected as board for 1983, still in conjunction with the two council members, and in particular Aage Vølund was thus elected as founding president of the Region.

In 1983 two meetings were organized:

Biometrical problems in agricultural, forestry and animal investigations, 26-27 April 1983, Ultuna, Uppsala, Sweden

Design and analysis of clinical trials, 13-14 October 1983, Göteborg, Sweden.

The officers for 1984 were

Holmgeir Björnsson (IS)

Timo Hakulinen (SF)

Erik Mønness (N)

Mats Rudemo (DK)

Paul Seeger (S), secretary and treasurer

Jon Stene (DK; Council)

Hans Wedel (S, Council), president

These were reelected for 1985, with the addition of Aage Vølund (DK; Council)

A conference on Biometric problems in population biology was organized in Asker close to Oslo 14-15 January 1985.

A conference on Biometrical problems in agriculture and forestry was organized in Aas 17-18 June 1985.

A conference on Epidemiology and environmental research was organized in Riistina 2-4 September 1985.

The officers for 1986 were

Søren Andersen (DK), treasurer

Holmgeir Björnsson (IS)

Timo Hakulinen (SF), president

Erik Mønness (N)

Jon Stene (DK), secretary

Hans Wedel (S)

Inge Helland (N, Council)

Aage Vølund (DK; Council)

A joint meeting of the British and Nordic regions was held in Cambridge 6-9 April 1986.

A conference on statistical documentation in clinical trials was held in Sigtuna 29-30 May 1986.

A conference on Statistical methods in medicine and pharmacology was held in Køge 6-8 October 1986.

The officers for 1987 were

Søren Andersen (DK), treasurer

Holmgeir Björnsson (IS)

Sven Eriksson (S)

Timo Hakulinen (SF), president

Juni Palmgren (SF)

Jon Stene (DK), secretary

Steinar Tretli (N)

Hans Wedel (S)

Inge Helland (N, Council)

Aage Vølund (DK; Council)

A conference on biometric problems in agriculture and forestry was organized in Foulum 17-18 August 1987

A Nordic seminar on empirical life history analysis and panel studies was held in Stockholm, jointly organized with the Nordic Demographic society, on 25-27 November 1987.

The officers for 1988 were

Søren Andersen (DK), treasurer

Holmgeir Björnsson (IS), president

Lennart Bondesson (S)

David Edwards (DK)

Timo Hakulinen (SF)

Juni Palmgren (SF)

Jon Stene (DK), secretary

Steinar Tretli (N)

Hans Wedel (S)

Inge Helland (N, Council)

A conference on statistical methods of prevention trials was held in Espoo 31 May – 1 June 1988.

The officers for 1989 were

Søren Andersen (DK), treasurer

Holmgeir Björnsson (IS), president

Lennart Bondesson (S)

David Edwards (DK)

Timo Hakulinen (SF; Council)

Sigrun Helgadóttir (IS)

Juni Palmgren (SF)

Jon Stene (DK), secretary

Steinar Tretli (N)

Hans Wedel (S)

Inge Helland (N, Council)

A joint meeting between the Nordic and the German Regions was held in Celle 27 February – 2 March 1989.

The first conference of the Nordic Region common for all areas of biometry was held in Laugarvatn 21-23 August 1989.

The officers for 1990 and 1991 were

Søren Andersen (DK)

Holmgeir Björnsson (IS, Council)

Lennart Bondesson (S)

Trond Haider (N), secretary

Timo Hakulinen (SF; Council)

Sigrun Helgadóttir (IS)

Niels Keiding (DK)

Juni Palmgren (SF)

Jon Stene (DK), president

Steinar Tretli (N), treasurer

Hans Wedel (S)

A seminar on Statistical methods in genetic epidemiology was held in Helsinki 2-4 May 1990.

A 'workshop' (course) on Advanced statistical methods in epidemiology was held in Helsinki 10-14 September 1990.

A Mathematical genetics meeting was held in Copenhagen 8-9 April 1990.

The 4th symposium on biometrical problems in agriculture, forestry and animal investigations was held in Joikoinen 19-21 August 1991.

The officers for 1992 and 1993 were

Søren Andersen (DK, Council)

Holmgeir Björnsson (IS, Council)

Lennart Bondesson (S)

Mervi Eerola (SF)

Trond Haider (N), secretary

Sigrun Helgadóttir (IS)

Niels Keiding (DK)

Juni Palmgren (SF), president

Steinar Tretli (N), treasurer

Hans Wedel (S, Council)

Several courses were held under the auspices of the Region or in collaboration with other institutions. In addition

The sixth symposium on biometrical problems in agriculture, forestry and animal investigations was held in Garpenberg 16-19 August 1993

A meeting on general methodology with applications in epidemiology and clinical biostatistics was held in Bagsværd 6-8 October 1993

The officers for 1994-95 were

Odd O. Aalen (N), president

Lennart Bondesson (S)

Mervi Eerola (SF)

Sigrun Helgadóttir (IS)

Niels Keiding (DK)

Doris Tove Kristoffersen (N), secretary

Petter Laake (N)

Juni Palmgren (SF, later S, Council)

Steinar Tretli (N), treasurer

Michael Væth (DK, Council)

Hans Wedel (S, Council).

The first general meeting for the Region (except for that in Iceland in 1989) was held in Göteborg 14-16 June 1995.