



FORTE Network Meeting, Ystad Saltsjöbad, Skåne, 6 - 7 September 2018

Methodological issues in register-based research

Theme: The origin of research questions – where do they start and when do they stop?

Organizers: Jonas Björk, Anders Ahlbom, Anita Berglund, Kirk Scott

Thursday 6 September 2018

12:00 Lunch

13:00 Introduction to the FORTE network. Outcome of previous years and continuation.

Aim of the meeting. Procedures. Expected outcomes. Presentation of participants.

13:15 The origin of research questions – an introduction to the theme (Anders Ahlbom; 15 min)

Group discussions (30 min)

A different reason to look at mortality after AMI: testing a hypothesis (Karin M, Marcus E; 30 + 15 min)

14:45 Coffee break

15:15 The origin of research questions in Demography (Gunnar Andersson, Ann-Zofie Duvander; 30 + 15 min)

16:00 Introduction to group discussions (Anita Berglund; 15 min)

16:15 Group discussions

17:30 Relaxation

19:30 Dinner

Friday 7 September 2018

08:30 Group discussions (continued)

09:30 Coffee break

10:00 Research on rheumatoid arthritis – experiences from the interplay between clinical and epidemiological research (Lars Alfredsson; 30 + 15 min)

10:45 Presentations and conclusions. Future network activities.

12:30 Lunch

13:30 - 15:00. Concluding visit to the spa (optional)

FORTE Network Meeting – General information

Aim

The aim of the FORTE Network 2016 – 2018 is to strengthening the position of Swedish register-based research, partly through increased knowledge and shared experiences regarding adequate scientific approaches and partly by forming new long-term partnerships between significant research groups in Epidemiology and Demography, both at junior and senior levels.

Format

This is by no means a traditional conference where you passively listen to lectures and presentations. Instead, the format will be informal introductions followed by lively discussions, both in plenum and in smaller groups. Although only a few have been asked to prepare presentations, active preparation and participation is expected from everyone and is crucial for a successful and rewarding meeting.

Expected outcome

FORTE requires that results of the network meetings are reported. New insights, methodological ideas, clarification of concepts etc. across the disciplines that merit further work, grant applications and publications as short communications or original papers are encouraged.

Participation

The network funding will cover accommodation but not travelling costs.

Please notify Anna E Larsson (anna_e.larsson@med.lu.se) about your participation by e-mail no later than 29 June 2018. Inform Anna about any special dietary requests that you might have.

Travelling to Ystad Saltsjöbad

Please see <http://www.yzb.se/om-oss/vagbeskrivning/> or <http://www.yzb.se/om-oss/vagbeskrivning/?lang=en> for information on how to get to the meeting.

Theme: The origin of research questions – where do they start and when do they stop?

The focus of this year's network meeting will be the origin of research questions, both in general and more specifically within Demography and Epidemiology. While researchers in theory have the freedom to pick their own research questions, they are in practice often driven by what can be financed or possible to study. Societal challenges and concerns highlighted by politicians and decision-makers represent another common source of research questions and scientific studies. Some studies are testing specific hypotheses whereas others may generate new ones. A study could aim at falsification, i.e. trying to disprove existing hypotheses or theories in line with Karl Popper's refutationism, or they could as another extreme be more or less driven by the data at hand. Another classification of research questions and studies could be based on prior probabilities of finding something of scientific interest, where the "risk willingness" seem to vary considerably across different research (and researchers). The nature of the research question being addressed is seldom described or reflected upon in scientific papers. Yet another reflection is that many paper seem to include a more or less perfunctory statement that additional research is needed, i.e. some of the research questions are left without answer. But is that always true? When is additional research no longer needed? And if still needed, which type of research should we then pursue?

So, where do you put your own research in all this? To what extent have the nature of your research questions and scientific papers changed over time, and to what extent will they continue to change in the future? Are there differences between disciplines with respect to how research questions come about and how they are positioned? How can we benefit from dual or multiple perspectives when we formulate new research questions and projects? These and several interrelated questions will all be key topics that we will discuss during this year's meeting.