



**FORTE EpiDem Network Meeting, Ystad Saltsjöbad, Skåne, 20 - 21 September 2023**

## **Methodological issues in register-based research**

### **Theme: Societal relevance of causal inference**

Organizers: Jonas Björk, Anita Berglund, Siddartha Aradhya, Maria Brandén

#### **Wednesday 20 September 2023**

- 11:45 Lunch
- 13:00 Introduction to the FORTE network. Outcome of previous years and continuation.  
Aim of the meeting. Procedures. Expected outcomes. Presentation of participants.  
Introduction to the theme: [Siddartha Aradhya, Societal relevance of causal inference](#). Followed by discussions in the groups.
- 14:05 *Session I: [Johan Hallqvist, Title: Scientific knowledge, and political decision-making](#). Followed by discussions in the groups.*
- 14:45 Coffee break
- 15:15 *Session II: [Sarah Valdez, Title: Using register data to better test policy](#). Followed by discussions in the groups.*
- 15:50 *Session III: [Conor MacDonald, Title: When clinical trials change clinical practice: To whom do the results apply?](#) Followed by discussions in the groups.*
- 16:20 Break
- 16:35 *Session IV: [Maria Feychting, Title: Can register-based research be used to draw conclusions about health effects from radiofrequency electromagnetic fields?](#) Followed by discussions in the groups.*
- 17:30 Relaxation
- 18:30 Dinner

## **Thursday 21 September 2023**

- 09:00 Summary and take aways from Day 1
- 09:15 *Session V: Rickard Ljung, Title: SARS-CoV-2 vaccination and myocarditis - who should we vaccinate? Followed by discussions in the groups.*
- 09:45 Coffee break
- 10:00 *Session VI: Gunnar Andersson, Title: COVID-19 and fertility research. Followed by discussions in the groups.*
- 11:00 Reflections, concluding remarks from the groups.  
Future network activities.
- 11:45 Lunch
- 13:00 - 15:00. Concluding visit to the spa (optional)

## **FORTE EpiDem Network Meeting – General information**

### **Aim**

Founded in 2015, the overall aim of the FORTE EpiDem Network (<https://www.lupop.lu.se/epidem>) 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 and meals but not travelling costs.

### **Travelling to Ystad Saltsjöbad**

Please see <https://www.yzb.se/om-oss/kontakt/> for information on how to get to the meeting.

## **Theme: Societal relevance of causal inference**

The focus of this year's meeting will build on the themes from several of the previous FORTE EpiDem-meetings and deal with the societal relevance of our research, specifically in the context of causal inference in register-based research. We will explore how our different disciplines view their role as researchers in producing societally relevant research and discuss the necessary components for being able to draw causal conclusions from observational research. The theme will be structured around three questions that extend previous meetings. Firstly, we will examine how societal relevance motivates research questions and whether it is our responsibility to conduct societally relevant research, acknowledging that different disciplines may have varying definitions and perspectives on this matter. Secondly, we will investigate how methodological approaches influence the societal relevance of research, taking into account variations across disciplines in terms of causality versus description in empirical research, as well as internal and external validity. Lastly, we will address the distinction between policy and societal relevance and explore ways to enhance the societal and policy relevance of our research, including considerations of effect sizes. This meeting not only builds upon the discussions on causal inference from 2016 but also connects with previous FORTE EpiDem-themes covering topics such as the origin of research questions (2018), natural experiments and quasi-experimental designs (2019), and applied AI and machine learning methods (2022). Throughout the meeting, we will draw on concurrent examples from network members to enrich our discussions and foster cross-disciplinary learning and collaboration.