

News from CMSS

Welcome to our new research assistant

On September 12th 2016 Regina F. Heiberg started as research assistant at CMSS. Regina holds a Bachelor and Master of Science in Public Health from the University of Southern Denmark in Esbjerg. Her master thesis was about health among Danish fishermen, where she investigated the association between the fishermen's self-perceived musculoskeletal pain and physical capacity.



At the present moment Regina's primary task is to establish a national maritime register of health among seamen in Denmark. The purpose of the register is to establish a large, wide and in-depth register that includes various information about seamen's health.

Besides her master thesis, Regina has not worked with health within the maritime sector, but she finds the problems in the maritime field exceedingly interesting. Her scientific interest is health inequality, which is also found in the maritime field. Regina comes from and lives in Esbjerg together with her husband. She loves being close to the sea, and she sees herself as a true "vestjyde".

Jørgen Riis Jepsen retires



Farewell reception for Jørgen Riis Jepsen at the Department of Occupational Medicine in Esbjerg.

On September 30th 2016, at the age of 70 years, consultant and associate professor Jørgen Riis Jepsen MD retired and consequently also terminated his affiliation with CMSS.

Since 1985 Jørgen has worked as a consultant at the Department of Occupational Medicine at the Hospital of Southwestern Jutland in Esbjerg. During his clinical work, the many contacts with patients who worked as fishermen and seafarers caused the development of his interest in the health and safety of these particular occupational groups.

It became clear to him that seafarers and fishermen were in many ways underprivileged compared to occupational groups on land. Their health differed disadvantageously, and their mortality was higher. At the same time, they lacked the services which were perceived as a matter of course in land-based occupations.

In collaboration with the occupational psychologist Jørgen Møller Christiansen (currently employed at CMSS) a book was published in 1988 by South Jutland University Press. This book described the wretched situation regarding maritime health and safety thoroughly. This book suggested the establishment of a centralized radio medical service in Esbjerg, training of navigators to undertake health care at sea, the establishment of safety organizations and occupational health services for seafarers and fishermen, and intensified and broadened control by the authority with increased focus on the working environment. In addition, it was suggested that a maritime health and safety research center should be established in Esbjerg with similar functions as the Work Environment Institute, which at that time provided such services to the land-based occupations.

It was a great satisfaction that everything proposed has since been implemented. This has probably had an impact on the very positive development in the maritime industries since then. There is no doubt that conditions at sea are much healthier and safer today and that the maritime safety culture is now significantly better than it was in the eighties.

Jørgen was formally affiliated with CMSS in 2009, primarily as a part-time research director and since 2012 as a part-time lecturer. This has led to strengthened links between CMSS and other research institutions in Denmark, Scandinavia, Europe and China. He has conducted international courses, conferences and meetings on occupational safety and health at sea, and has contributed numerous scientific publications from CMSS as first author or co-author ([http://findresearcher.sdu.dk/portal/da/persons/joergen-riis-jepsen\(de024d2e-c2f7-4933-89e6-565654ae3f5b\).html](http://findresearcher.sdu.dk/portal/da/persons/joergen-riis-jepsen(de024d2e-c2f7-4933-89e6-565654ae3f5b).html)). These publications have dealt with seafarers as well as fishermen. Covered topics include toxicology, ergonomics, fatigue, lifestyle, accidents, and shipwrecks. Furthermore, register studies have also been conducted.

In 2000 Jørgen was a founding member of the Danish Society of Maritime Medicine and served as chairman of the society through the first many years.

New funding for CMSS

CMSS has received a grant of DKK 75,000 from the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation for the preparation of an application under the EU's Horizon 2020 program entitled 'The seafarers' EU clinical and research e-Health Data Program (EUSea-E-Health EUSH)'. The purpose is to apply for a call in Horizon 2020 under the name: PPI for uptake of standards for the exchange of digitalised healthcare records.

The objective of this Horizon 2020 application is to create a model for an international e-medical record for seafarers. Participants from 5-8 partner countries will describe, in each of the respective "work packages", which variables to be included, the advantages and disadvantages of different technical solutions, data protection, etc.

In the final project, every time seafarers are in contact with the health care system, new values for e.g. blood pressure, use of medications, hospitalizations, chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes and hypertension will be collected. E-medical records would be used by health personnel on board the ships, in the maritime medical offices, at Radio Medical and at the hospitals. This will give doctors a better opportunity to follow the development of the different parameters - for the use of early and correct



diagnosis, prevention and treatment as well as for research. Furthermore, it will also strengthen Denmark's position as an internationally leading nation within research in seafarers' health.

The senior researchers Olaf C. Jensen and Despina Andrioti from CMSS are in charge of the project.

Danish Maritime Fair

Together with 'Blue SDU', CMSS participated in the Danish Maritime Fair which took place at Lokomotivværkstedet in Copenhagen from 25th - 27th October. The fair was visited by a large variety of maritime stakeholders. HRH Prince Joachim of Denmark also visited our stand and showed great interest in the interdisciplinary research network.

Blue SDU is an interdisciplinary network that unites maritime and marine researchers at SDU. The underlying idea of the network is to create one main entrance to the marine and maritime research at SDU. Blue SDU consists of researchers from 9 different units across the five faculties of the university. The mission is to conduct interdisciplinary research that creates value and quality with relevance to society. During the Danish Maritime Fair, an official reception for Blue SDU was held, and on that occasion the winning groups of 'the Blue SDU Think Tank' Challenge 2016 were announced and rewarded.

The Blue SDU Think Tank aims to build an interdisciplinary network for students, alumni, researchers and stakeholders across SDU. The main task of the Blue SDU Think Tank is to host one annual challenge for students, put forward by members of the Blue SDU in cooperation with a marine or maritime company or institution.



This year, the Think Tank was sponsored by the Danish Maritime Fund, and the Think Tank challenge was posed in cooperation with Tuco Marine Group, with help from the Maritime Cluster Funen. Tuco, with faculty consultation, asked the participants to meet a timely and complex challenge regarding adoption of new technology and user integration, using interactive user manuals as a format. The subject was broken up into four subtopics; technology platform, user experience, safety and operations, and maintenance and operations, and different groups covered the four topics. The challenge took place in week 42 and was finalized by written reports handed in to Tuco. The following week all groups gave oral presentations at the Danish Maritime Fair. The report can be downloaded from www.sdu.dk/bluesdu.

The Maritime Fair and The Blue SDU Think Tank was a rewarding experience for CMSS. We worked to bring greater awareness to the maritime research field, and, at the same time, we got the opportunity to nurture and expand our working relationships. We look forward to repeating the success in the future.

25th anniversary in 2017



Next year, the Centre of Maritime Health and Society (CMSS) can celebrate its 25th anniversary. The research unit became a reality in 1992 as a result of a governmental decision and was named Institute of Maritime Medicine. Until 1999, the research unit was an institute under the University Centre of South Jutland in Esbjerg. In 2000, the Danish state, represented by the Danish Maritime Authority, founded the independent Research Unit of Maritime

Medicine, which became the new name of the unit. In 2007, the research unit turned into CMSS, as an integral part of the Department of Public Health at the University of Southern Denmark. The former Centre for Maritime Research and Innovation has since become part of CMSS, and helps to strengthen and promote the synergy between the two disciplines; health and society.

CMSS has a yearly funding from the Danish state which supports the foundation of the research unit in addition to external funding.

An official celebration of the Centre will take place in the autumn of 2017. Further information about the event will follow at a later date.

A selection of other CMSS activities

MSSM 2016

Again this year, CMSS participated in the MSSM conference in Nyborg. Solveig Dohrmann gave the presentation 'What do we know about determinants of fatigue in seafaring, and how is the quality of this knowledge?' She also took part in the subsequent panel discussion on the topic. You can read more about the session [here](#).



SHIPSAN ACT, closing meeting in Rhodes, Greece

On 27th – 28th September, in Rhodes, Despina participated in the closing meeting for the EU SHIPSAN ACT Joint Action. Here the work of the co-operation was presented in a walking poster session. The participants had the opportunity to discuss the results with the leaders of the working packages such as: surveys and literature review for infectious diseases, chemical and radiological events, occupational health and safety on ships, etc.

Furthermore, in this last meeting the appointed representatives of the EU member states decided continuation of certain activities until the next EC funding, including co-operation on scheduling of inspections on passenger ships on international voyages - in accordance with the European Manual for hygiene standards and communicable diseases surveillance. In addition, they agreed to continue the training activities including the e-Learning, webinars and face to face courses and the maintenance of the SHIPSAN information system.

The EU SHIPSAN ACT Joint Action partnership is currently working at finalising the deliverables. For more detailed information about the EU SHIPSAN ACT Joint Action – please visit www.shipsan.eu.

Workshop on social isolation, depression and suicide

In October, Kimmo Herttua participated in a two-day workshop in London on social isolation, depression and suicide. The workshop was organized by ITF Seafarers' Trust, and the aim was to discuss key areas of mental health within the maritime industry. Around 50 experts from all over the world attended the workshop – counting participants from inside the maritime sector as well as participants from outside the maritime field; but all with expertise and knowledge about mental health. The workshop gave an excellent update on knowledge in the area, and views on the different intervention possibilities were exchanged.

Workshop on Health Promotion in the Maritime Setting

Lulu Hjarnø was invited by the ITF Seafarers' Trust to take part in a maritime workshop for experts within health promotion - together with seafarers and other relevant maritime stakeholders. The workshop took place in London at the ITF House on 7th – 8th November, and the main objective was to develop a consensus on health promotion strategy and priorities for the maritime sector.



Lulu contributed with a presentation about her research on opportunities and challenges implementing health promotion interventions for seafarers in the maritime setting in Denmark. During the workshop, important determinants of health for seafarers were identified. Relevant models and tools for the application of health promotion as well as evaluation approaches were discussed, and activities were

suggested for improving the health and wellbeing of seafarers at sea, in port as well as at home. A very interesting workshop.

Other tasks of CMSS Staff

Apart from research, the CMSS staff also contributes with teaching and coordination of teaching modules, supervision of bachelor students, master students, and PhD students as well as censor tasks, mainly at the Master of Science in Public Health programme at SDU. CMSS encourages students at all levels to consider “Blue Challenges” in planning of their thesis subjects.

In November a Master thesis in Public Health was finalized and defended by Maria Kjær, with the title ‘Lifting technique among Danish commercial fishermen’ [Løfteteknik blandt danske erhvervsfiskere]. The aim was to identify challenges in the working environment for optimal lifting techniques in order to give recommendations for prevention and health promotion interventions. The results show that factors like physical space and work organization, lack of technical aids, culture, performance based pay and regulations need to be addressed to best promote health onboard Danish fishing vessels. A list of recommendations was suggested by the student. For more information please contact Lulu Hjarnø lhjarnoe@health.sdu.dk.

Recently published scientific articles from CMSS (names of CMSS employees marked in bold)

- Nar AS, **Andrioti D**, Ganatra P. Changes in the health care system of India have effects on management of human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immune deficiency syndrome epidemic. *Indian journal of public health* 2016;60(2): 167-168.
- **Dohrmann SB**, Leppin A. Determinants of seafarers’ fatigue: a systematic review and quality assessment. *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health* 2016: 1-25. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s00420-016-1174-y>.
- Frantzeskou E, **Jensen OC**, Linos A. Health status and occupational risk factors in Greek small fisheries workers. *International Maritime Health* 2016;67(3):137-143.
- Baygi F, **Jensen OC**, Qorbani M, Farshad A, Salehi SA, Mohammadi-Nasrabadi F, Asayesh H, Shidfar F. Prevalence and associated factors of cardio-metabolic risk factors in Iranian seafarers. *International Maritime Health* 2016;67(2): 59-65.
- Berg-Beckhoff G, **Østergaard H**, **Jepsen JR**. Prevalence and predictors of musculoskeletal pain among Danish fishermen - results from a cross-sectional survey. *Journal of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology* 2016: 1-9. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/s12995-016-0140-7>.
- **Jepsen JR**; **Rasmussen HB**. The metabolic syndrome among Danish seafarers: a follow-up study. *International Maritime Health* 2016;67(3): 129-136.
- **Østergaard H**, **Jepsen JR**, Berg-Beckhoff G. The workload of fishermen: a cross sectional survey among Danish commercial fishermen. *International Maritime Health*, 2016;67(2): 97-103.

You can find more CMSS publications and bibliographic details by clicking [here](#).