

# HPR *news*

| Health Promotion Research News | Issue 10 - June 2013 |





# editorial

## unit pioneers in bachelor education in saudi arabia

**T**he Unit started an exciting enterprise a year ago. We are used to teach foreign students in Esbjerg in our MSc program. These students have come from different countries ranging from Nepal to Australia and from Lithuania to Greece, from Uganda to Finland. However, the present enterprise is totally different; this time we teachers go to the students, who continue to live in their own cultural and social context. It is us teachers who need to adjust not only our views, attitudes, knowledge about life in general but also the teaching, its level, applicability, relevance, and practical examples.

The two programs our Unit is coordinating since January 2013 are Bachelor of Science in Health Education and Promotion, and in Epidemiology, at Princess Nora Bint Abdulrahman University (PNU), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Even if I used to live in Saudi Arabia five and half years around the age of 30 - and I still speak some Arabic, launching a new women's bachelor program in that modern Middle Eastern country early this year was like a jump into dark. Those who know me probably say that that is what I like. When our first group last January went there, we had no confirmation if we were going to have any students or what kind of accommodation we would have! A new university, new faculty, new curriculum, new students, new staff, new place and habits – could be a source of stress for many! On the other hand, our group of two seniors and two juniors seemed to be ready for an adventure. And an adventure it was! After five days in a luxury hotel and numerous phone calls, emails and visits to several flats in the PNU campus area, we got our 400 square meters JD1 flat. Then only to write long shopping lists to buy cooking pots, plates, towels, salt and pepper, cleaning material and other necessities; after a couple of shopping tours - travelling back by taxi fully packed: four women in the back seat (front seat not seen a proper place for women), the rest of empty space in the car stuffed with household items. In two days we had established a nice home for four of us. We also started to peek under the head scarfs to find other westerners in the campus to ask where to shop, get transport, buy phone sim cards etc. - wonderful for those of us who like detective work. We enjoyed our 30 min walk to faculty and back along a busy road – only to realize after three weeks that there was a pleasant higher level pedestrian, ladies-only (no abaya needed) walk-a-way under the palm trees above our heads. This probably tells how much PNU, due to launching the study programs ahead of the planned time, had had time to provide instructions and guidance for the first-comers!

After we heard good news of getting 60-70 students and after we had met the students, we started literally to create our teaching, find teaching rooms – and keys to them, local staff etc.

Modern, vast facilities kept us walking back and forth, up and down the stairs – good for us and funny to locals. The students, whom we call *our girls*, proved to be wonderful, warm, curious, friendly- and a large part of them, also motivated to study, ambitious to change their own life, that of their families and of the whole country.

In the HPR NEWS issue October 2012 we shortly described our first impressions at PNU based on the first visit there last summer (<http://static.sdu.dk/mediafiles//F/E/4/%7BFE4B7B6D-256C-4041-928B-D0978942F8AA%7DHPR%202012-8.pdf>). This issue of HPR NEWS is dedicated to our Saudi enterprise. It describes the formal part of the teaching contract, PNU as such and our curriculum, our first research project starting at PNU, and also about the Saudi society and health. But it also provides a human side of the enterprise: experiences on the teaching and life in general in Saudi Arabia of the staff who has now worked there. Further, we have a great pleasure to have report on interview with our Dean dr Tamader Al Rammah as well as on student testimonials in this issue.

Other topics in the issue also have a connection to Saudi Arabia: an art exhibition of Saudi female artists in Århus, and in the context of this a Saudi visit to the Unit - and also the latest PhD defense was done by our PhD student living and working in Saudi Arabia!

Arja R Aro

See more at:

[http://sdu.dk/en/Om\\_SDU/Institutter\\_centre/Ist\\_sundhedstjenesteforsk/Forskning/Forskningsenheder/Sundhedsfremme/Nyheder/PNU+uk](http://sdu.dk/en/Om_SDU/Institutter_centre/Ist_sundhedstjenesteforsk/Forskning/Forskningsenheder/Sundhedsfremme/Nyheder/PNU+uk)

## **banebrydere i bacheloruddannelse i saudi arabien**

Forskningsenheden startede med en spændende opgave allerede sidste år, hvor vores forskere skulle tage til Saudi Arabien og undervise saudiske kvinder i Folkesundhedsvidenskab. Det drejer sig om to studieretninger, som startede op i januar 2013 – 'Bachelor of Science in Health Education and Promotion' og i 'Epidemiology' ved Princess Nora Bint Abdulrahman University (PNU) i Riyadh.

Det var en stor udfordring selv for mig, da jeg tidligere har levet i en periode på fem et halvt år i Saudi Arabien, siger forskningsleder og professor Arja R Aro. Vi vidste intet om, hvor mange studerende, der ville dukke op ej heller hvor vi skulle bo. Hele universitetet er nyt og alt skulle startes op fra bunden, hvilket har været en kæmpe udfordring i sig selv. Men det har vist sig at være starten på et eventyr. Vi endte med at få vores egen store lejlighed på campus og måtte selv ud og købe al inventar – kørsel i taxi frem og tilbage til shopping centre klædt behørigt i vores lange kjoler (kaldet abaya) og tørklæder. Andre vesterlændinge på campus kunne fortælle os, hvor det var bedst at købe de forskellige nødvendige ting til hjemmet. Vi har 30 minutter til fods fra lejligheden til campus – en gangbro kun for kvinder. Mange nye retningslinjer skulle læres for os nykommere.

Det endte med at vi fik mellem 60-70 studerende, der vidste sig at være positive, motiverede og nysgerrige unge piger. Så kunne vi gå i gang med at forberede undervisningen, finde lokaler - selv nøgler og lokale medarbejder. I oktober udgaven af HPR News 2012 beskrev vi vores første besøg sidste sommer (<http://static.sdu.dk/mediafiles//F/E/4/%7BFE4B7B6D-256C-4041-928B-D0978942F8AA%7DHPR%202012-8.pdf>). Denne udgave af HPR News er tilegnet vores saudiske projekt. Her beskrives den formelle del af undervisningen (kontrakt, PNU og undervisningsplaner), vores første forskningsprojekt og samfundet og sundheden i Saudi Arabien. En menneskelig side af projektet beskrives også; enhedens medarbejdere beskriver selv deres oplevelser undervejs. En rapport fra dekan Dr Tamader Al Rammah med et interview også fra studerende findes også beskrevet i denne udgave. Senere findes et indlæg om en udstilling af saudiske kvinder, der er kunstnere og som besøgte Kvindemuseet i Århus og senere vores enhed her. Vores sidste ph.d.-forsvar blev holdt af en læge, der bor og arbejder i Saudi Arabien.

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**Front page photo:** The very first SDU teacher group at PNU: Anne Nistrup Hansen, Eva Ladekjær Larsen, Toyin Adeyemo and Arja R Aro on a weekend trip to Dammam, Saudi Arabia

**Abstracts** by authors and unit secretaries

**Editor-in-chief** Arja R. Aro



araro@health.sdu.dk

**Managing Editor** Stella Kræmer



skraemer@health.sdu.dk

# saudi arabia

## country, population and health

**K**ingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is a very rich country due its No1 oil producer and exporter role. The population size is 28 million including eight million guest workers -especially those working in manual and caring jobs are often of Indian and Bangladeshi origin and of Philippines. KSA is becoming rather urbanized, with decreasing family size from 4.9 children per woman in 1995 to 2.8 in 2010. At the same time life expectancy has risen from 70 to 74 years. At the moment 50% of the population is 15 years and below and only about 5% 65 years and older. The combination of decreasing fertility and increasing life expectancy will in a few generations bring challenges to find work force and carers for elderly.

Due to free and largely encouraged education, literacy rate is high, above 97%. The educational system is close to the Danish one. There are two dozen universities, most of them for both males and females; at the moment over half of the students are females.

### Health

It is interesting that the main health problems in Saudi Arabia are actually the same we have here in the western world. That means that sedentary lifestyle leading to overweight and metabolic syndrome, especially lack of physical inactivity, makes up a major health problem, especially among females; however, the country still has to deal with several infectious diseases as well but also (road traffic) injuries are common. Hot climate as well as social and cultural barriers to moving around in public add to the sedentary lifestyle problem. Tobacco use is generally low in Saudi Arabia compared to the western countries. But tobacco use is increasing, especially among young females. The health system is rather medically oriented; public health and health promotion are not well known. It is true that there are so called health promotion clinics, but these function mostly as risk factor screening clinics instead of more structural or contextual approach. The health care system, which is high standard also by western criteria, consists of hospitals and health clinics; 62 % of hospitals and 53 % of health clinics are run by Ministry of Health and the remaining by private local organisations. A special challenge is the lack of local Saudi health care workforce as only 20% of physicians and about 50% of nurses are Saudi; on the other hand, over 90% of the health care administration staff members are Saudis.

References for the information presented in this text can be received from [araro@health.sdu.dk](mailto:araro@health.sdu.dk)

Arja R Aro

## saudi arabien land, befolkning og sundhed

Kongeriget Saudi Arabien (KSA) er et rigt land, pga. eksport af olie. Befolkningstallet ligger på 28 mil. inkl. 8 mil. gæstarbejdere fra Indian, Bangladesh-områder og Filippinerne. Børnefødselstallet daler og forventet levealder vokser. Dette vil i fremtiden give store udfordringer til arbejdsstyrken til pasning af ældre. De har et højt niveau af uddannelseskompetencer som ligger tæt på det danske system. Der findes næsten 25 universiteter og halvdelen er med kvindelige studerende.

De største sundhedsproblemer i Saudi Arabien er overvægt og livstilssygdomme som i resten af den vestlige verden. Især mangel på fysisk aktivitet blandt kvinder ses tydeligt. Der findes også infektionssygdomme og trafikuheld med skader. Det varme klima og sociale og kulturelle barrierer gør at man kører meget i bil. Tobaksforbrug er lavt men er begyndt at stige især blandt unge kvinder. Sundhedssystemet er meget medicinsk orienteret og der er ikke meget fokus på folkesundhed og sundhedsfremme. Der er en høj standard bestående af hospitaler og sundhedsklinikker (også sundhedsfremme-klinikker til risikofaktor screeninger) Lidt over halvdelen er under sundhedsministeriet og resten på private hænder. Der er en stor mangel på lokale saudiske læger og sygeplejersker.

# pnu

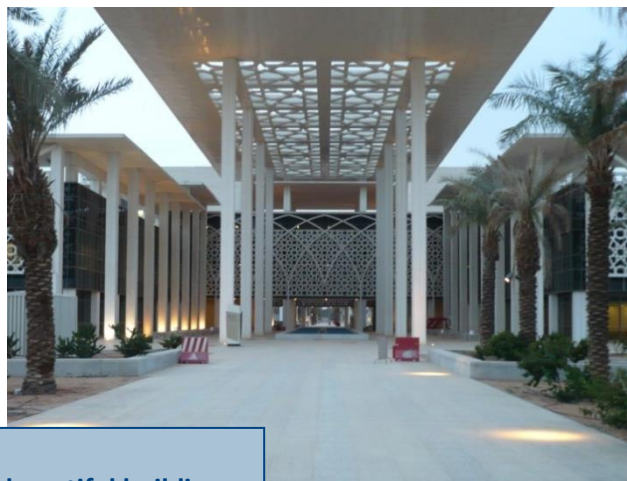
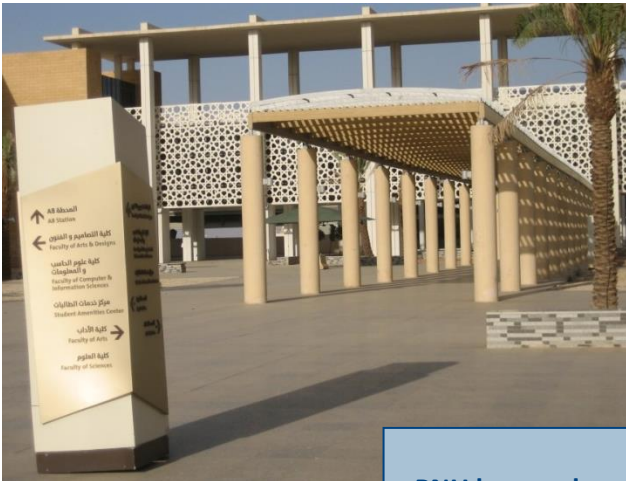
princess nora bint abdul rahman university

**T**he Princess Nora bint Abdul Rahman University (PNU) is the first women's only university in Saudi Arabia. It is the tenth largest university and largest women-only university in the world. It is composed of 32 campuses including 10 faculties across the Riyadh region and a new library capable of holding 4.5 million volumes. The university was founded as Riyadh University for Women in 1970. King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz launched the building of the world's largest and most modern women's institution of higher education in a self-contained higher education city. This vision has become a reality with the opening of the University City for the Princess Noura Bint Abdulrahman University for Women which is expected to be fully functional by 2012 with a capacity of 200.000 students. A new campus built in 2010-2012 can accommodate 40,000 of these students along with 12,000 employees. It has a 700 bed teaching hospital and research centers for nanotechnology, information technology, and bioscience.

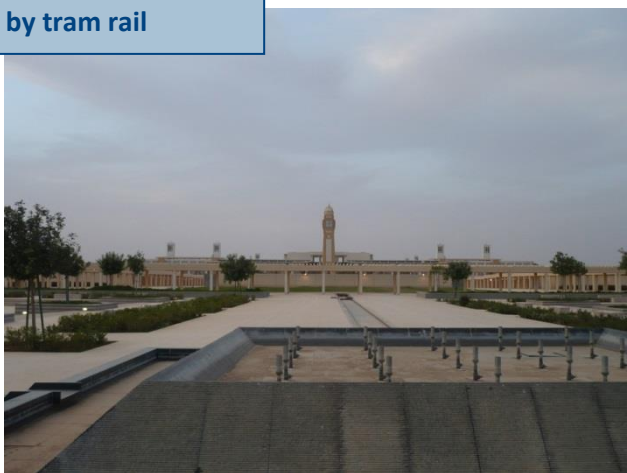
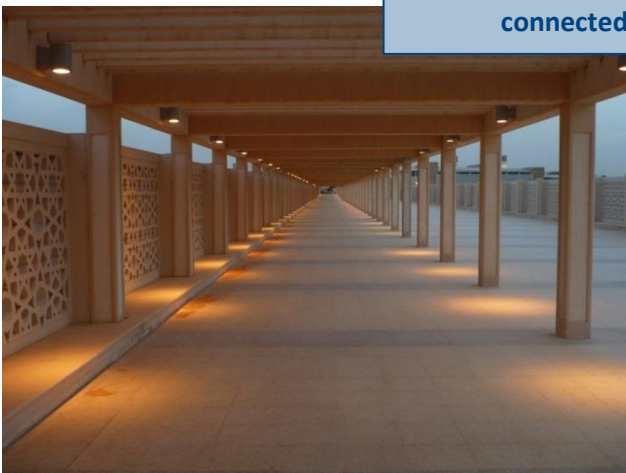
Photo 1 Inside the campus area women are free to take off their abaya and head scarf. This warning reminds you when you are



Photo 2. A 14km rail with free tram ride is available at the PNU campus



**PNU has modern, beautiful buildings connected by tram rail**





## pnu

Prinsesse Nora bint Abdul Rahman Universitetet (PNU), grundlagt i 1970 er det første universitet kun for kvinder i Saudi Arabien. Det er det tiende største universitet og største af sin slags for kun kvinder i verden. Der er 32 campusser, 10 fakulteter og helt nyt bibliotek, der kan rumme 4,5 mil. bøger. Det nye PNU er blevet lanceret af kongen Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz som verdens største og mest moderne kvindelige institution i højere uddannelser som en enhed som uddannelses by med ca. 200.000 studerende. I campusbyen kan der bo 40.000 studerende og 12.000 ansatte. Der er et universitets hospital med 700 senge og forskningscentre for nanoteknologi, informationsteknologi og bi-videnskab.

# sdu-pnu

program is based on two contracts

SDU Institute of Public Health signed its first contract with PNU in the spring 2012, after a very short negotiation phase. The first contract concerned the SDU accredited 3 year BSc in Public Health program, which was agreed to be slightly adjusted to fit the Saudi context. After the acceptance by the Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia, the name of the program became BSc in Health Education and Promotion. The plan is to have 35-40 students per year at PNU in Riyadh. The teaching is coordinated by the Unit for Health Promotion Research staff in Esbjerg. This staff will also carry out most of the teaching, but e.g. Thrombosis Research Unit, Esbjerg and later also Social Science faculty, also participates. In addition, this 4.5 year contract includes a plan to bring up to 25 students to our Esbjerg-based MSc in Public Health program as well as 8-10 PhD students.

Photo 3 The festivity gate of PNU



Later in 2012, another contract was signed, according to which SDU will also export additional BSc in Epidemiology to PNU for 55 students per year so that the first 1.5 years are taught together with the students studying Health Education and Promotion. The Epidemiology part is taught by another SDU institute, National Institute of Public Health (SIF).

The SDU-PNU contract has two special characteristics. First, it aims to transfer knowledge so that after the first year the teaching is little by little transferred to the local PNU staff, which gets training and supervision. After 4.5 years the locally hired staff would take over the program. Second, the SDU staff does not move for longer periods to Riyadh but travels there for 4-5 weeks at a time so that there is SDU coverage at PNU throughout the contract period. The resources received from Saudi Arabia enable hiring

new SDU staff, which in addition to teaching at PNU can contribute to normal teaching and research tasks in SDU.

Arja R Aro

### **sdu-pnu**

To kontrakter mellem SDU og PNU blev underskrevet i 2012. De handler om eksporten af vores SDU akkrediterede 3- års bachelorprogram i folkesundhedsvidenskab, som skal tilpasses saudiarabiske forhold. Ministeriet for Højere Uddannelser i Saudi Arabien godkendte to uddannelser: BSc Health Education Promotion og BSc i Epidemiology, sammenlagt drejer det sig om ca. 90 studerende pr år i Riyadh. Undervisningen koordineres af Forskningsenheden for Sundhedsfremme i Esbjerg med undervisere herfra, fra tromboseforskning og senere samfundsvidenskab. Der er yderligere forhandlet om at få 25 kandidatstuderende til Esbjerg samt 8-10 ph.d.-studerende fra PNU.

# 12 staff members

went to PNU

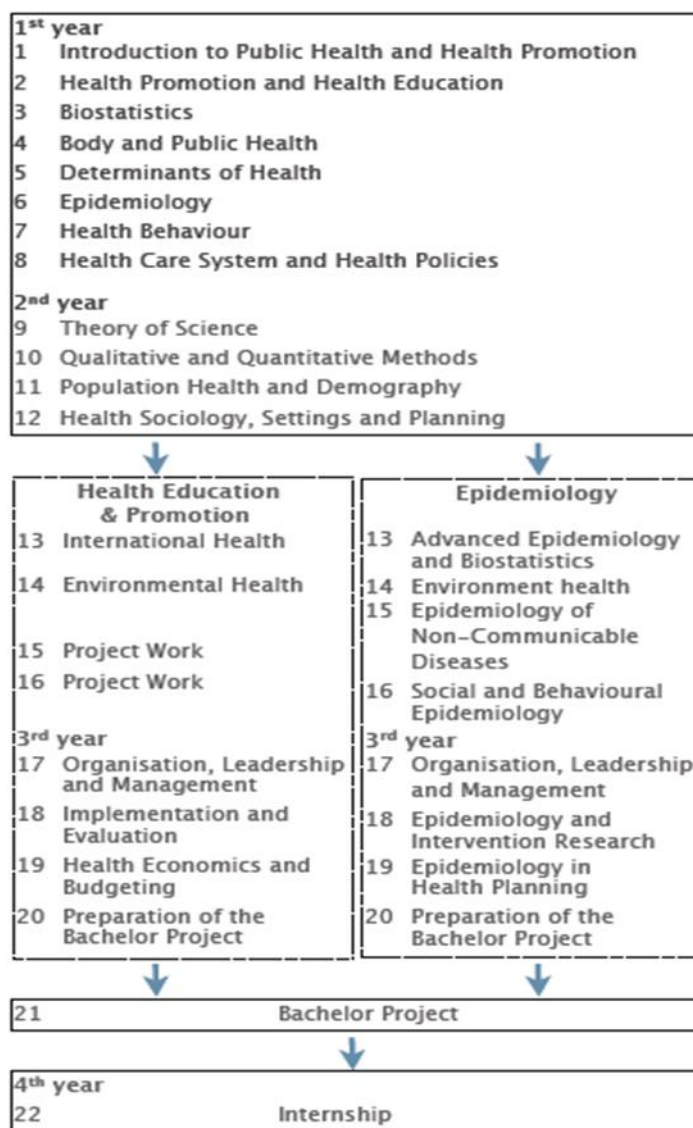
**P**rogram of BSc in Health Education and Health Promotion and BSc in Epidemiology was launched at the beginning of this year and the first semester is now over. It has been an exciting journey that has brought many opportunities, some practical work and some implementation difficulties along the way. The experience with the first four courses (see figure 1) and teaching 63 students there can benefit our further work and export of the BSc education to PNU, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, but potentially also to other similar contexts.

Our teaching is based on one month courses, which are led by a group of one senior (professor, associate/assistant professor, postdoc), one junior (PhD student) and two student assistants, who typically are our last year MSc in public health students - these students assistants normally stay at PNU for two successive courses to create continuity. Our program is the only program at present at PNU running with this kind of visiting teacher structure; other, also foreign universities have sent staff to stay there at least one year. Our way is challenging especially in the knowledge transfer from one group to another; however, it also allows our staff to continue teaching and research at SDU at SDU in Denmark.

During the first semester, the implementation process led to revision of the rules for exams and attendance and to the development of detailed job descriptions for different SDU staff groups, which are involved in the program. In parallel with this work, PNU

Figure 1 The structure of the curriculum

<http://static.sdu.dk/mediafiles//3/3/5/%7B335F1965-A1AF-4C66-8003-FB9E18D6A614%7DPNU-Brochure%20-%2005042013.pdf>



also started to recruit employees in order to assist our education. These employees will be directly employed by PNU, and two who got job offers have studied in Esbjerg in our own SDU study programs. We hope that they can act as a bridge between PNU and SDU in the daily work.

The SDU-PNU study management team behind the export of the BSc program; Prof Arja R Aro (Head, Scientific Quality) , Assistant Prof Eva Ladekjær (Member), Solveig Dohrmann (Study Secretary) and Associate Prof Pernille Tanggaard Andersen ( SDU-PNU Study Leader) is looking forward to starting the fall semester and hope for continued good cooperation in this regard.

Below is an illustration of the construction of the two SDU BSc programs that are taught together the first 1 ½ years: BSc in Health Education and Promotion (Unit of Health Promotion/ IST), and BSc in Epidemiology (National Institute of Public Health -SIF).

## 12 ansatte tog til pnu

BSc in Health Education and Health Promotion og BSc in Epidemiologi blev skudt i gang i begyndelsen af året og første semester er vel overstået. Det har været en spændende rejse, der har budt på mange muligheder, en del praktisk arbejde og enkelte implementerings vanskeligheder undervejs. Erfaringerne fra de første fire kurser kan vi drage stor nytte af i det videre med at eksporterer vores BSc uddannelse til PNU, Riyadh.

I løbet af det første semester har implementeringsprocessen affødt revidering af regler for eksamen, tilstedeværelse og udarbejdelse af nærmere funktionsbeskrivelse for de forskellige undervisere, som inddrages på uddannelsen. Sideløbende med dette arbejde er PNU også begyndt at rekruttere medarbejdere ind som skal bistå vores uddannelse. De første som bliver ansat direkte på PNU, er to af vores egne master uddannede i Folkesundhedsvidenskab, og vi håber, at de kan fungere som en form for brobyggere mellem PNU og SDU i det daglige arbejde.

Ledelses- teamet bag eksporten af uddannelsen Professor Arja R Aro, Adjunkt Eva Ladekjær, studiesekretær Solveig Dohrmann og Lektor Prof Pernille Tanggaard Andersen ser frem til at påbegynde efterårssemestret og håber på fortsat godt samarbejde herom

Pernille Tanggaard Andersen

# empowerment

by education

**J**ulie Dreier, our PhD student who was teaching biostatistics at Princess Noura Bint Abdul Rahman University (PNU) this spring, interviewed our **Dean, Tamader Alrammah**, especially for the HPR NEWS on April 30th 2013. Tamader is the Dean of Faculty of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at PNU. This text summarizes the interview.

In Saudi Arabia empowerment of women is of great importance. It is important for the woman herself, her family and for society as a whole. Tamader Alrammah explains *“we believe that women’s empowerment comes from education, as you cannot empower women that are not educated enough to see and acknowledge the future.”*

For this reason women’s education is a top priority in Saudi Arabia today and schools and universities are being built all around the country, including ‘female only’ universities. PNU is a great example of a female only university that is born out of the ambition of educating and empowering Saudi women. *“We have a great vision here at PNU and a lot is expected from us and from our students and their achievements. A lot of privileges have been given to PNU. Thus we have a duty to do our best in providing high level education as a mean to qualify our student to the highest level possible”.*

Saudi Arabia is facing an expansion of lifestyle-related diseases among its population; at the same time it has lacks in parts of the health care system. So there is a great need for well-qualified people to work. This is needed both to elevate and promote health in the country and to develop the health care system.

The Dean continued that *“our students will be called to work in many sectors; the government, e.g. the ministry of health, private and/or public hospitals and primary health care units to mention some. Based on these facts master and PhD programs are also in the PNU pipeline. Only this way we are able to meet the requirements of the country and not least to prepare young Saudi women for the future”.*

Solveig Dohrmann and Julie Dreier

### handlekraft via uddannelse

Julie Dreier, PhD studerende ved Forskningsenheden for Sundhedsfremme, underviste i Biostatistik ved Princess Noura Bint Abdul Rahman Universitetet (PNU) i foråret 2013. Her interviewede Julie dekanen for Fakultet for Rehabilitation and Health Sciences, PNU, Tamader Alrammah til HPR News.

Omdrejningspunktet for interviewet var empowerment af Saudi Arabiske kvinder. Ifølge dekanen, er man i Saudi Arabien, fuldt ud overbevist om, at empowerment gavner både den enkelte kvinde, hendes familie og samfundet. Man tror videre på, at empowerment udspringer fra uddannelse. Derfor har uddannelse af kvinder høj prioritet i Saudi Arabien i dag. Uddannelses institutioner bygges overalt i landet, og PNU er et eksempel på en sådan institution. Visionen er klar på PNU; man arbejder målrettet på at levere uddannelse af høj kvalitet, for at de studerende har mulighed for at opnå de bedst tænkelige kvalifikationer, såvel fagligt, som menneskeligt, til glæde for kvinderne, deres familier og samfundet.

# studying health

a step forward

In the spring of 2013, our PhD student Julie Werenberg Dreier interviewed six students in our program at PNU. The girls *Shroog Bel-Obaied* (19 years old), *Leena AlGhamdi* (20y), *Lulu Al-Dehaim* (19y), *Nora Alshlash* (20y), *Sultana Al-Sulaiman* (19y), and *Fatma Almarshad* (19y), explained about their ambitions, and reasons for choosing Health Education and Promotion or Epidemiology as a step towards their future profession.

For many of the girls, the two SDU bachelor Programs at PNU, were an exciting option - Sultana explains *"When I heard about the program, I immediately was interested. It is a whole new program and it is the first time here in Saudi Arabia they teach epidemiology on an undergraduate level."* Lulu also described her reasons for choosing this study *"I love health education. I want to become a health professional and to improve our society – there is really a need for it, because people are lacking the knowledge of what makes a healthy life."*

Since the beginning of the semester the students have been introduced to several different theories, approaches and methods within public health. They explain that they have learned how to apply theory to plan health education and how to change health related behaviors step by step. Fatma says *"What I like most about the program is how we have learned how to communicate with people. Having a bachelor degree in Health Education and Promotion enables you to help others to change their lifestyle into a healthier one. And I really like that."*

The structure and teaching methods applied in the two programs are also very different from what the girls are used to. Shroog explains: *"I really like the module structure of the program and the different ways of teaching. We have lectures, exercises and group work and this combination enhances our learning outcome."* Leena agrees and elaborates *"I really like the variety of teaching methods applied in this program – it is a new way of learning for me. In the exercises I can learn from my mistakes – I believe that learning by doing is much more effective than just sitting and listening. And since the program is in English, I have also really improved my English skills."*

And with regards to the girls' future, they already have a clear vision and ambitious plans for their professional careers. Leena wants to become a researcher to *"find the answers to why people get sick and to investigate this in a Saudi Arabian context"*. Shroog aims to work with patient education and community health, while Nora wants to work with women and child health. All six girls have been positively surprised about their experiences within the program so far and encourage other young Saudi females to enter. Nora and Sultana stated *"We need more specialist health educators to encourage healthier lifestyle in our society. This program provides a unique*

*opportunity to study Health Education and Epidemiology in Saudi Arabia, and it is a good chance for everyone who wants to become a public health professional”*

Julie Dreier

### **studie i sundhed – et skridt fremad**

I foråret 2013 interviewede vores ph.d.-studerende Julie Werenberg Dreier seks studerende på vores uddannelser på PNU. Pigerne forklarede om deres ambitioner og grunde til at vælge at læse Sundhedsfremme eller Epidemiologi som et skridt i retning af deres fremtidige karriere. For mange af pigerne, var de to SDU bacheloruddannelser på PNU, en spændende mulighed, da de fortalte, at det blandt andet er den første bacheloruddannelse inden for epidemiologi i Saudi Arabien. De saudiske piger er siden begyndelsen af semestret blevet introduceret for flere forskellige teorier, tilgange og metoder inden for folkesundhedsvidenskab, hvor de fortæller at de har lært at anvende teori til at planlægge sundhedsfremme interventioner og lært hvordan sundhedsadfærd kan ændres. Strukturen og de undervisningsmetoder, der anvendes i de to uddannelser er meget forskellige fra, hvad pigerne er vant til, men de er især glade for gruppearbejdet og øvelserne. Alle seks piger er blevet positivt overrasket over deres foreløbige erfaringer og opmuntrer andre unge saudiske kvinder til at søge ind, da der i stigende grad er behov for sundhedsfremmeeksperter i Saudi Arabien.

# teacher experiences

**T**he very first course, **Introduction to Public Health and Health Promotion**. This course was used more or less to get organized: to find out expectations of the students, their background in terms of studying skills and practice but also in terms of the level we could start to teach. The students had heard only a few days before the semester start for which program they had been accepted. This meant that many students were still looking for a correct study line, rooms etc. One of the first tasks was to agree on common set of rules such as attendance. We created a survey to find out students' perceptions and expectations. We asked: if the lecture is supposed to start at 8am: does it mean students should be present at 08:00, at 08:10 or 08.15, or around 08.30 etc? For most of the students starting at 8am meant 'around 08.15-08:20'. So we set the starting time as 08:15. The survey also asked best ways we could maintain silence in the lecture.. The students also wrote motivation letters describing why they chose a health study, what they expected etc. The plan is to give back these original letters when the students graduate in 4 years. The very first course was mostly used for very practical skills such as scientific (and critical) reading and writing. The time available for actual academic content of the course was used to introduce central terms in public health and epidemiology using Saudi examples of the public health challenges, available statistics and reports. The social (or ecological) model of health developed by Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991) was our central tool throughout the course.

Photo 4 The smiling teachers of the first two courses early morning in front of the housing area: Mette Winge Fredsgaard, Arja R Aro, Eva Ladekjær Larsen, Anne Nistrup Hansen, and Toyin Adeyemo



Arja R Aro

**T**he second course: **Health promotion and Education**. Forskere i Danmark og andre lande, der har ladet sig inspirere af WHO's definitioner af sundhedsfremme, betragter sundhedsfremme som begreb og metode, der integrerer flere niveauer i det sundhedsfremmende arbejde. Det vil sige man inddrager både individ, nærmiljøet, individet færdes i til dagligt og samfundsmæssige strukturer, der sætter rammerne for hvordan man bedst kan skabe et sundt liv. I Saudi Arabien er det imidlertid ikke en velintegreret tilgang til sundhed. Det smitter af på samarbejdet med vores



samarbejdspartnere og på hvordan de studerende modtager undervisningens centrale budskaber. I undervisningsmodulet Sundhedsfremme og Sundhedspædagogik var de studerende ubekendte med sundhedsadfærd også kan ændres gennem f.eks. at gøre adgangen til motion lettere eller at politiske tiltag kan regulere borgeres adfærd gennem eksempelvis højere afgifter på tobak. Ligeledes var metoder, hvor der tages udgangspunkt i borgerens behov og ressourcer ukendte for dem. Det kan naturligvis også hænge sammen med umodenhed og/eller uvidenhed. De studerende havde opfattelsen, at skal en sundhedsrisikabel adfærd ændres, gøres det bedst gennem information baseret på envejskommunikation mellem sundhedsprofessionel og patient. Der var altså en udbredt forståelse af at viden automatisk ændrer adfærd. Forskellene i opfattelsen af hvordan man skaber forandringer i sundhedsadfærd var årsag til mange, livlige diskussioner. For eksempel når snakken gik på rygestop. Det som optog de studerende var at fortælle rygeren at tobak er sundhedsskadeligt og at man derfor bør holde op. Enkelte refererede også til koranen, som anbefaler at man lever sundt. De havde ikke fokus på motivation eller på at rygning også forbindes med nydelse og afstresningsmiddel og altså ikke blot er sundhedsskadeligt. Heldigvis var de studerende positive overfor at adfærdsændringer bør tage udgangspunkt i den enkelte og at flere niveauer kan integreres i det sundhedsfremmende arbejde. Ligeledes blev det i gruppearbejde livligt diskuteret hvordan man kan integrere det politiske niveau til at fremme sundheden. Sundhedsfremmende interventioner som f.eks. sundere mad i kantinen og brug af cykler på campus var tiltag, de studerende var meget optaget af.

Eva Ladekjær Larsen

**T**eaching assistant at PNU. I was teaching assistant for the first two SDU courses at PNU and stayed there a bit over two months. Being a teaching assistant at the world largest female university has been quite an experience. That the university furthermore is placed in Saudi Arabia has been yet another experience to remember.

Despite the many facts and stories you hear about a country like Saudi Arabia and despite as many interesting, challenging and culture-shocking impressions Saudi Arabia brings, the brightest memory I have brought with me home is meeting the students: These girls age 18-20, who, when the black clothes are off, differ from each other as much as every young person in the West, who are warm, curious, interested and have lots to share; whether it is a taste of Arabic coffee, Arabic phrases or personal stories.

To teach this group of girls have sometimes been challenging when coffees, storytelling and twitter-updates have continued into the classroom, however in two months clear improvements were seen and new routines were taught. To teach the students problem-based-learning, where the main focus is on cases solved in groups, seemed in the beginning to be a whole new world of learning, discussion and reflection that opened up to them. Some adopted the new ways fairly quickly, while others – also due to language barriers – did with a slower speed. Finishing the module with a role play discussing legalizing of female drivers in Saudi Arabia, where some

students really took on the role, acting and almost yelling out the points of their character, was much unexpected to experience when we first came to the university.

Apart from the life inside the Health Faculty, living at the campus at PNU is safe and easy and international female teachers that you meet in the gym, in the bus and in the shopping mall, soon become familiar. New acquaintances introduced us to places where you eat delicious meals, join international desert-walks in the weekends and where to visit other beautiful places in and outside Riyadh.

So despite all the many facts and stories, Saudi Arabia tends to create, these only become a small part of what you see and experience while teaching at PNU; you mostly meet warm, friendly and interested people who are open to get to know you and your culture a bit more.

Anne Nistrup Hansen

**The third course: Biostatistics.** Our team Marie-Louise, Stine, Julie and me had no clear picture from Saudi Arabia but we were all interested in this culture described in the nice fairy tale of “Arabian nights”. Arriving at PNU, we experienced this big area, the Metro inside the campus and the imposing buildings of this female university. It told us that female education seemed to be important in Saudi Arabia. However, particularly for me it was difficult to wear the abaya and scarf. Therefore I was glad that in the first floor of the university – in the so called female area – it was not necessary to wear it. When this was told to me first time, I thought that there will be some buildings that have a first floor. But in reality the

**Photo 5 The Biostatistics team in a festive mood at a Danish embassy party in Riyadh: From the left: Gabi Berg-Beckhoff, Marie Louise Marthendal Olsen, Stine Bøtchiær and Julie Dreier**



whole university is built on the first floor. You can walk outside for more than 3 km; and the whole metro is accessible only for females.

The university is a very new one. It started one year ago. There is a new library with all necessary internet access, nice lecture halls and group rooms with all necessary facilities. In the Saudi Arabian culture it is not possible that males teach female students face to face. We organised one lecture so that the lecturer taught from another building. His face and his slides were presented to the students via an online presentation. He could ask questions to the students but the answers needed to be summarized and sent to him via an extra

microphone. From the European perspective it looks strange, but it worked fine. At least five IT-women were present to organize the whole procedure and all students listened carefully to the presentation.

Students were interested in this crazy “numbers related” topic biostatistics. I learned during my teaching experience that it is always difficult to attract attention and interest to this difficult topic. I remember some students who followed me after the second lecture and begged me to force some noisy students to be

quiet during the lecture. They liked to listen to the lecture and they were also active in answering and asking questions.

The work with the Saudi Arabian staff was very fine but also challenging. It is a very gentle society where it is not easy to say no. If a problem occurred, they do not like to say: "You cannot enter the room tomorrow." They say instead: "The problem is not fully solved but we try to solve this tomorrow." We needed some time to understand them and to learn to deal with such kind of talking. On the other hand, they took good care of us. They invited us to a cultural event in Riyadh, they tried to help us always immediately and finally it was also possible to solve some misunderstandings with regard to our different cultures. I - and I believe also Marie-Louise, Stine and Julie - were glad to be there, to get a more authentic picture of one of the countries from "Arabian nights". However, a bit of this myth is still present. Not only the students, but also we learned a lot.

Gabi Berg-Beckhoff

**T**he 4<sup>th</sup> course: **body and public health at PNU**. Before going to Saudi Arabia, we had several concerns regarding safety and foreign traditions, but most of our fears and doubts disappeared upon arrival at PNU, where we had a highly useful introduction to the place by two teaching assistants from the previous course.

Photo 6 Else-Marie Bladbjerg



Meeting the students was such a positive experience! Anticipating a room full of subdued women, it was great to hear so much laughter and (endless) chatter. After a while, it actually became necessary to learn the Arabic word for "enough". The students had variable levels of written and spoken English and some were more motivated than others, but overall they were interested in the subjects (molecular biology, anatomy, physiology and nutrition) and worked hard. Despite several last-minute adjustments to our teaching schedule, locked rooms, an emergency evacuation and a lecture hall without air-conditioning, we managed to conduct the entire course almost as planned, and the students had satisfactory results.

Photo 7 Sonja Spodek

The students were not at all reluctant to learn about the detailed structure and functions of the human body, but we noticed a strong cultural difference regarding the use of drawings. The students were timid about drawing, fearing they would be evaluated on their artistic skills, and they could not easily interpret the sketches we often relied on for explanations.

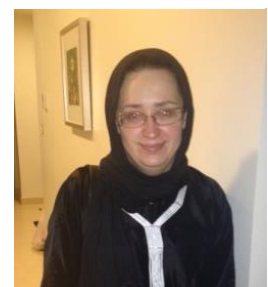


Photo 8 Jane Skov



Instead, they preferred short texts that could be memorized. Surprisingly, the students were extremely active on various social media, and it was possible to implement some online teaching using Twitter.

All in all, we had a very memorable stay at PNU which prompted many reflections about teaching and cultural differences. The lessons learned will

undoubtedly be useful next year at PNU, but also for the courses we teach in Esbjerg and Odense.

Jane Skov, Sonja Spodek and Else-Marie Bladbjerg

### **danish resume af undervisningserfaringer**

Det første semesters undervisningserfaringer er beskrevet i forhold til hvert af de fire undervisningsmoduler. Det første modul var en grundlæggende introduktion til faget folkesundhed, hvor også basale studieteknikker var centrale. Det var også i dette modul vi fik afstemt forventninger til hinanden, fik etableret et passende undervisningsniveau og arrangeret mange praktiske ting som f.eks. eksamensformer. I det andet modul var den store udfordring at undervise i at sundhed også har en sammenhæng til bl.a. politiske forhold, det nære miljø og sociale normer. De studerende var meget bevidste omkring individets adfærd i forhold til sundhed, men ubekendte med denne bredere tilgang til sundhed. I det tredje modul, Biostatistik, berettes om den besværlige, men også morsomme procedure der skal til for at en mand kan forelæse for de studerende kvinder. Ved hjælp af en skærm kan de studerende både se og høre ham, mens han ikke kan og heller ikke må se dem. I det sidste modul, sygdomslære, erfarer underviserne at de studerende er storforbrugere af sociale medier som facebook og twitter. Med stor succes integreres disse derfor i undervisningen. Undervisningsassistent Anne Nistrup Hansen, som var med de to første moduler, skriver om de studerendes engagement i forhold til gruppearbejdet og også om de udfordringer det kan være at få ivrige, glade, fnisende og stortalende unge kvinder til at være stille under forelæsningsne.

### **english summary of evas teaching experiences**

Teaching health promotion at PNU was a challenging task since health behavior among the students was considered to be an individual decision alone, hence neglecting structural, social and cultural factors that also has an influence on health. Fortunately the students were keen on learning of this broader approach towards health.

# our 1<sup>st</sup> research

## project in saudi arabia

It does not take long after arriving in Saudi Arabia before one discovers the very limited access especially women have to physical activity. Most public gyms and pools are reserved for men, women have just recently been allowed to ride a bike and the request of wearing the top-to-toe abaya in public does not make physical exercise easier. In addition to these limitations, environmental factors also seem to have a great influence; the weather is hot, the cars are big, comfortable and many, and the roads are crowded and dangerous for pedestrians. The escalators are everywhere and asking for directions for the stairs usually results in surprised reactions and heads shaking.

It did not take long before we found that this field of research was very important and relevant to look more into. Our students had hard time believing the physical inactivity statistics we showed them in the lectures: over 96 % physically inactive in Saudi Arabia. Meeting the young girls at PNU gave us also glimpses to their cultural, social and individual factors related to physical activity.

Photo 9 Anne and Eva show good example – in the female sports staff center



This research interest has now resulted in a joint research project (and our first research grant) investigating cultural and psychosocial barriers and facilitators to physical activity among health students at PNU. The research group is led by Arja R Aro and other researchers involved are: our Dean Tamader Al Rammahd, local study coordinator Noura Abd Al-Moither, Eva Ladekjær Larsen, Anne Nistrup Hansen, and Thomas Skovgaard from SDU Sports and Biomechanics institute. A pilot phase was already done by Anne in May including focus groups interviews among students. The next phases are a self-reported questionnaire, stakeholder interviews and a feasibility study to carry pedometers. The main study, a large scale campus-based physical activity intervention, is planned for the next year assuming we get funding for that.

We are looking very much forward to start this research collaboration with PNU and learn more about individual cultural, social and environmental facilitators and barriers to physical activity. The PNU campus is a good setting for this study, since there are excellent sports facilities available, we have the students attending our program for several years, and we also have access to the PNU administration and decision makers via our Dean as a member of the research group. In the long run we hope to be able to contribute to a healthier life style in Saudi Arabia.

Anne Nistrup Hansen and Arja R Aro.

### **vores første forsknings projekt i saudi arabien**

I Saudi Arabien er mere end 96% af befolkningen fysisk inaktive og det har store konsekvenser for folkesundheden. I et samarbejde mellem forskere fra PNU og SDU er der derfor iværksat en pilotundersøgelse, der har til formål at identificere kulturelle og psykosociale faktorer, der forhindrer eller fremmer motionsdyrkelse. Denne pilot undersøgelse danner baggrund for en større motionsfremmende intervention der skal foregå på PNU campus næste år.

# the way we live

while in saudi arabia

The housing area where our staff stays, is very modern with new buildings and rather luxurious, furnished flats, separate houses for females, males and families, but also newly planted palm trees and flowers, so not yet very green.

Photo 10 PNU campus at dusk during a prayer time



Photo 11 Home road at the PNU campus & one of our houses, JD1.



## Moving around

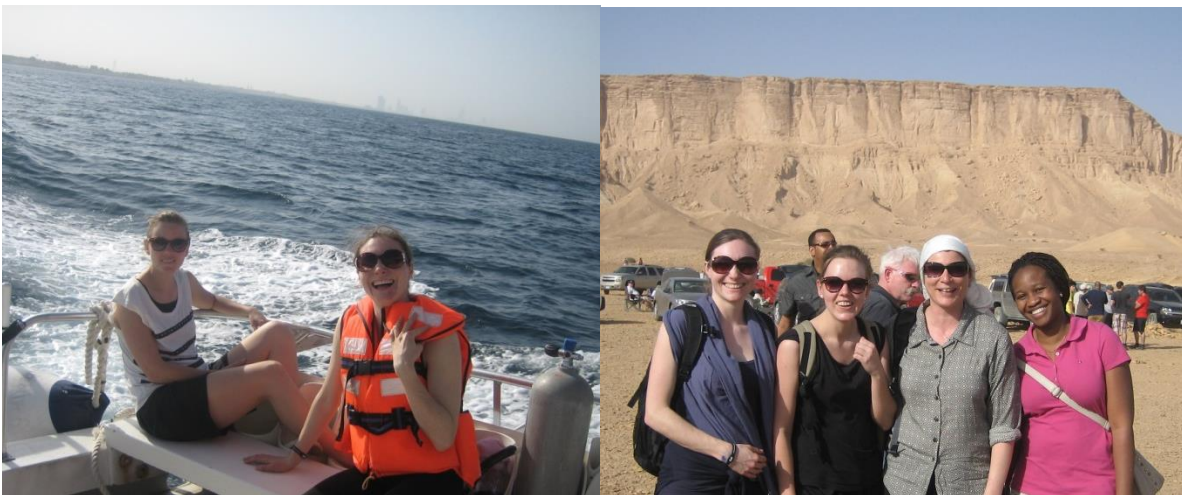
We have free daily transport to the closest supermarket; we use private drivers to take us around in Riyadh. We have also traveled by train to Dammam on the east coast and from them by taxi to Bahrain; some of us flew to Jeddah and did some water sports there; desert walk is another popular

hobby among expats. Those who enjoy diplomatic circles can easily find embassy parties frequented by large numbers of expats. As females we naturally also enjoyed the typical Saudi pass time: shopping in enormous malls.

Photo 12 Locals on a picnic in the park of the National Museum in Riyadh



Photo 13 Left: Anne and Mette relaxing Right: Ladies in the photo: Mette, Anne, Eva and Toyin on their desert walk



### hvordan vi bor i saudi arabien

Som udsendt til Saudi Arabien er der ofte lange arbejdsdage og underholdningsindustrien i form af biografer, koncertarrangementer eller diskoteker er så godt som ikke-eksisterende. Alligevel findes der gode muligheder for fritidsbeskæftigelse, bl.a. shopping i et af de utallige shopping centre, arrangementer på ambassader, ørkensafari eller en tur til det røde hav.



# female saudi artists

A delegation of invited SDU staff members participated the opening of the 'Riyadh's Women 2013 - Arts and Facts' exhibition in Women's Museum in Denmark on 24th May in Aarhus.

**Photo 16** Reem (on the right), her sister and her mother and Pia Koningsfeldt (left) in the opening of the exhibition in Aarhus



The exhibition originated at the Danish Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; The idea for the exhibition was

born when Pia Koningsfeldt, the wife of the Danish ambassador and the exhibition Project Coordinator, met some female Saudi artists and high level professionals in Riyadh. Pia told in her speech at the exhibition opening ceremony that she was met with human warmth and sincere hospitality by these exceptional Saudi women. Their strong

personalities, ambitions, and unconventional lifestyle acted as an inspiration for her and further, for this exhibition to come true in the Danish Kvindemuseet in May. The exhibition is composed by photos, texts and artworks by five Saudi Arabian sisters who represented the pioneer generation in the education of women, and three other young artists representing today's forerunners in training and practitioners of art. One of the artists, Reem al Subai, together with her mother and sister, was present at the opening ceremony of the exhibition and we were able to share ideas and experiences with these women about life and art in Saudi. Reem is a 21-year old visual artist, graduated from the Arts and Skills Institute in Riyadh. The 'Riyadh's Women 2013 -

**Photo 15** Part of the SDU delegation visiting the exhibition. Julie Dreier (left), Eva Larsen, Arja Aro, Leena Eklund, Lulu Hjarno and Solveig Dohrmann (right).

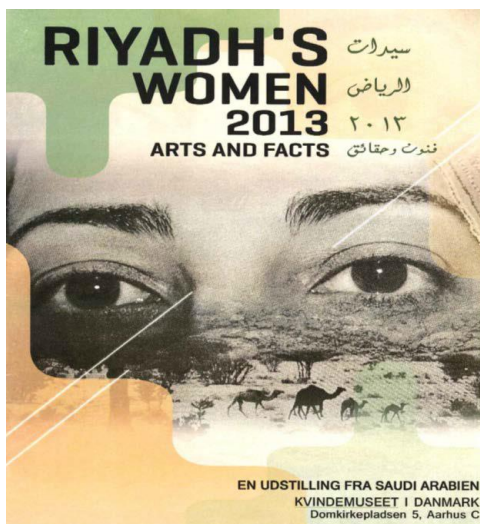


**Photo 14** At SDU the three Saudi guests (ladies with dark hair from the left) and Pia Koningsfeldt got presents from Arja and Pernille after a vivid discussion and exchange between the guests and SDU the staff and student



Arts and Facts' exhibition in Aarhus Kvindemuseet is open for visitors until mid-August.

On Monday the 27th May Reem was visiting SDU in Esbjerg together with her mother, sister and Pia Koningsfeldt as invited guests. They got acquainted with the campus and the programmes provided by the SDU in Esbjerg followed by a plenary session where all the SDU staff participated and were able to ask questions about women, work, art and life in Saudi Arabia



as well as the Saudi guests' experiences here in Denmark. After the visit to SDU Reem's group returned back home to Riyadh. Pia Koningsfledt will proceed to work in Slovakia after summer and her future interest will be devoted to promoting the arts and music of the local Roma people.

Leena Eklund Karlsson

### **kvindelige saudiske kunstnere**

'Riyadh's Women 2013 – Arts and Facts' udstilling på Kvindemuseet i Århus den 24. maj 2013. Denne udstilling udsprang fra en idé af den danske ambassade i Riyadh, ved ambassadørens kone Pia Koningsfeldt. Hun havde mødt nogle kvindelige saudiske kunstnere, der også var højt uddannede. Hun var selv blevet modtaget med stor varme og gæstfrihed i sin første tid i Riyadh. Kvinderne dér har stærke personligheder, er ambitiøse og har en anderledes spændende livsstil. Dette var Pias inspirations kilde til udstillingen i Århus på kvindemuseet. Der er fem saudisk søstre, der udstiller med tekst, fotos og egen kunst. Senere ugen efter kom disse kvinder til SDU i Esbjerg, hvor vi mødtes med dem og udvekslede erfaringer og hørte mere om deres hjemland, kvinder i arbejde og livet i Saudi Arabien. Det var en varm oplevelse at have besøg af disse stærke kvinder. Pia Koningsfeldt skal nu videre til Slovakiet efter sommer, hvor hun skal promovere musik ved de lokale rumænske folk.

# anastasia

## back to riyadh

**A**nastasia Samara is our new post doc in epidemiology, who has lived in Saudi Arabia. She writes here about her life down there. In the end of this text is a short introduction of Anastasia.



Having lived in Riyadh, the capital of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been a beautiful experience with a charm of its own. Riyadh is located right in the middle of the desert. This ever present sun (rainy days are counted as few) and the heat are very important determinants of everyday life. Saudis are relaxed and easy-going people with a great sense of humour and a generosity in expressing themselves as well as in enjoying life. The sun and heat are also one of the reasons Saudis do cover themselves outdoors (both men and women wear traditional clothes) and give a feeling of privacy; people use cars very often instead of walking and most houses have outside walls.

As an expat and a woman, I can say I really enjoyed my time in Riyadh. Expats are highly respected by Saudis and I never had any issues due to the fact that I am a woman. On the opposite, I was very well taken care of because they felt that they had the responsibility to protect me and make me feel welcomed. As for Saudi women, there is a huge variation of attitudes but women, who are independent and come from educated families, do have a good life. Of course, some rules that are stricter for women do apply but there are always ways to overcome them. They can enjoy their free time by shopping, going out at a restaurant, taking care of their body, hair etc in beauty centers, going to parties etc. It seems that because cinemas and bars do not exist in the Kingdom that people do not celebrate life. The reality is there are many private parties that happen in an underground way. Expats are part of this lifestyle too and they are often invited by Saudis to private gatherings.

Saudi Arabia has really two sides; the one you see and the one you have to discover.

Anastasia Samara

Anastasia Samara was appointed for the new post-doc position at the Unit for Health Promotion Research. Originally from Greece, she has working experience in France and in Saudi Arabia. She is an epidemiologist with a focus on obesity and nutritional epidemiology and a bachelor in Clinical Nutrition. She was previously appointed as an Assistant Professor in King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia where she worked for two years. During her stay there, she was responsible for the development of a prospective cohort study with main aim, to understand the physio-pathology of

obesity, especially by applying ultrasound/imaging techniques and to study more thoroughly Arabs, yet poorly studied until now. Anastasia Samara has both research and teaching tasks at the Unit for Health Promotion. As for her teaching tasks, they concern mostly PNU in Saudi Arabia. As for research, her focus remains the same and it is double-oriented: 1) study further Arabs through projects that can be developed with the collaboration of PNU in Saudi Arabia and 2) understand the role of body fat distribution and its relationships with the metabolic disturbances occurring in early stages of fat accumulation; in other words, describe the sub-clinical phenomena occurring well before a disease such as type 2 diabetes manifests. Currently, this is a very active area of research in the field of obesity and chronic disease. Examining the early stages of obesity and related-disease development is of utmost importance for public health because it can help in identifying individuals at different levels of risk; not all people with obesity have the same burden.

Arja R Aro

### anastasia tilbage til riyadh

Anastasia Samara er vores nye postdoc i epidemiologi. Hun kommer fra Grækenland, men har også arbejdet i Frankrig og Saudi Arabien. Hun har boet i Riyadh midt i ørkenen i Saudi Arabien med konstant sol og meget lidt regn. Saudier er meget afslappede og venlige mennesker med stor sans for humor og er livsnydere, siger Anastasia. De går tildækkede ude pga. solen – både mænd og kvinder i traditionelt tøj. Biler bruges næsten kun som transportmiddel. Da jeg boede som 'expat' i Riyadh, nød jeg stor respekt og fandt det aldrig besværligt at leve dér som kvinde. Faktisk blev jeg meget beskyttet og budt velkommen, da de følte en grad af ansvar for mig. Saudiske kvinder, der kommer fra veluddannede hjem, har et godt liv. Dog er der strengere regler for kvinder, men disse kan altid overkommes. De shopper også, går på restaurant, skønhedsklinikker og går til fester. Da der ikke findes biografer og barer, holder folk egne store private fester og 'expats' inviteres ofte med til disse. Saudi Arabien har to sider: Den side du ser og den side, som du bliver nødt til selv at opdage.

# maria holst

new employee

I am a sociologist with specialization in health sociology. I have previously worked at the National Institute of Public Health, SDU, where I generally have researched in social inequality in health based on data from the Danish Health and Morbidity Surveys. Since 1 May I have worked at the Unit for Health Promotion as a research assistant working on my future PhD-project, in which I will investigate health in deprived neighbourhoods based on data from the Deprived Neighbourhood Health Profile Survey. In addition, I am going to teach at the new Bachelor's degree in Health Promotion and Health Education at Princess Nora Bint Abdul Rahman University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

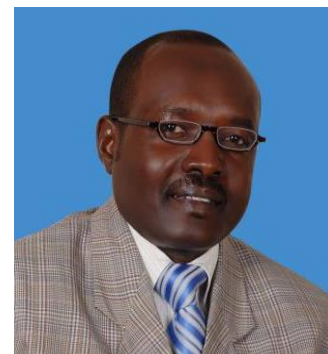


Maria Holst

# thesis defended

cancer found by naked eye? phd research tested the visual inspection method in sudan

**A**hmed Ibrahim, who defended his PhD thesis at SDU, Esbjerg, 10 April 2013 at 2 PM, comes organically from Sudan where he obtained Medical Doctor degree from Omdurman University; he specialized in public health and obtained Master Degree in Public Health from University of Malaya in Malaysia and Fellowship of Community Medicine from Sudan. After specialization he worked in different health sectors in Sudan and Saudi Arabia. He joined SDU in year 2008 as PhD research fellow; he pursued PhD studies as well as participated in teaching in the Bachelor and Master of Science programs of Public Health at SUD. Now Ahmed is working as public health specialist and head of the infection control department at King Fahd Hofuf Hospital in Saudi Arabia. Ahmed is married and father of two children.



Pap smear screening has been an established screening method in developed countries for decades. However, in developing countries, where cervical cancer is the leading cause of death among middle-aged women, Pap smear and human papillomavirus (HPV) screening are often not feasible. Ahmed Ibrahim, who is medical doctor, has done his PhD studies at University of Southern Denmark (SDU), studied feasibility and acceptability of visual inspection using by use of acetic acid (VIA) as a cervical cancer screening method and compared it with Pap smear in primary health centers in Sudan. The study focused on risk factors of positive VIA test among 100 women; acceptability of VIA test by screened women, performance of VIA versus Pap smear test in detection of cervical cancer among 1250 asymptomatic women; determine predictors of advanced cervical cancer among 197 women; and knowledge and practice of 230 physicians on cervical cancer screening in Sudan.



VIA had higher sensitivity than Pap smear as a cervical cancer screening method. VIA was found to be useful, feasible and acceptable in a primary health care in Khartoum State in Sudan; however, positive results need to be confirmed by colposcopy and biopsy. The study showed that women who had uterine cervix laceration, assisted vaginal delivery,

female genital mutilation, or episiotomy were more at risk for being VIA positive. Elderly women, not covered by health insurance, of African ethnicity, and living in a rural area, were more likely to be diagnosed at an advanced stage of cervical cancer in Sudan. These women would need cervical cancer screening and health insurance. Eighty per cent of the physicians in the study were for

cervical cancer screening program, 62% believed that cervical cancer can be tackled by diagnosis and treatment, while 43% claimed that this cancer can be prevented by vaccination of the women against HPV. Future implementation of cervical cancer screening program can benefit from the adequate knowledge and practice of physicians on cervical cancer. More efforts are needed to develop strategies for promotion of cancer prevention methods in continuous medical education.

**Title of the thesis:** Cervical cancer, risk factors and feasibility of visual inspection with the acetic acid method in Khartoum State, Sudan. The thesis without articles is available at:

[http://static.sdu.dk/mediafiles//4/8/B/%7B48B480A7-42B5-45F9-B1F7-4B3D65E1B42D%7DAhmed%20Ibrahim\\_PhD%20Thesis%20Book%20for%20website.pdf](http://static.sdu.dk/mediafiles//4/8/B/%7B48B480A7-42B5-45F9-B1F7-4B3D65E1B42D%7DAhmed%20Ibrahim_PhD%20Thesis%20Book%20for%20website.pdf)

### kræft – fundet med det blotte øje, visuel inspektions metode i sudan

... Ahmed Ibrahim, som forsvarede sin ph.d.-afhandling i Esbjerg, 10. april 2013 kommer oprindeligt fra Sudan, hvor han er læge med speciale inden for folkesundhed. I Esbjerg mens han var ph.d.-studerende underviste han også bachelor- og kandidat-studerende. Nu arbejder Ahmed som folkesundhedsvidenskabspecialist og er leder af en afdeling for kontrol af infektioner ved King Fahd Hofuf Hospital i Saudi Arabien. Han er gift og far til tre børn.

Smearprøve-screening (celleprøve-screening) har været en brugt screening-metode i udviklingslandene i årtier. Dog er screening ved smearprøve og 'human papillomavirus' (HPV) ikke anvendelige i udviklingslandene, hvor livmoderhalskræft er den største dødsårsag blandt midaldrende kvinder. Ahmed Ibrahim har undersøgt gennemførelighed af visuel inspektion ved anvendelse af eddikesyre (VIA visual inspection) som en metode for screening af livmoderhalskræft. Han har sammenlignet det med smearprøver i almen-sundhedscentre i Sudan. Undersøgelsen fokuserede på risikofaktorer af positive VIA undersøgelser blandt 100 kvinder, acceptabiliteten af VIA undersøgelser af de screenede kvinder, udførelsen af VIA kontra smearprøven ved opdagelse af livmoderhalskræft blandt 1.250 asymptomatiske kvinder, fastsætte indikatorer ved fremskreden livmoderhalskræft blandt 197 kvinder og viden og praksis blandt 230 læger ved livmoderhalskræft i Sudan.

VIA havde en højere sensitivitet som en screening-metode for livmoderhalskræft end ved smearprøve. VIA viste sig at være anvendelig, gennemførlig og acceptabel i almen-sundhedscentre i Khartoum, Sudan. Imidlertid skal positive resultater bekræftes gennem kopolskopi (undersøgelse af livmoderhalsen) og biopsi. Undersøgelsen viste, at kvinder, der havde haft beskadigelse af livmoderhalsen, født vaginalt, omskæring eller klip i mellemkødet var i højere grad udsat for at være VIA positive. Ældre kvinder, der ikke var dækket af nogen sundhedsforsikring, af afrikansk etnicitet og som levede i landdistrikter, var i højere grad i risiko for at få diagnosen i et fremskredent stadie af livmoderhalskræft i Sudan. Disse kvinder har brug for screening for livmoderhalskræft og sundhedsforsikring. 80 % af lægerne i undersøgelsen gik ind for screening for et livmoderhalskræftprogram, 62% mente at livmoderhalskræft kan håndteres ved diagnosticering og behandling, mens 43 % sagde, at kræften kan forebygges ved vaccination af kvinder mod HPV. Fremtidig indførelse af screening-program for livmoderhalskræft vil drage fordel af den viden, som lægerne har om livmoderhalskræft. Flere midler er nødvendige til at udvikle strategier for fremme af kræftforebyggelsesmetoder i medicinuddannelsen.

# new phd started

Infections and fever during pregnancy have been suspected to cause impairments in the brain development of the fetus and child. The aim of this PhD project is therefore to investigate whether or not infections and/or fever during pregnancy are associated with the neurodevelopment of the child, as measured by the presence of different disorders and conditions thought to be of neurodevelopmental origin. More specifically these include attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), school performance, dyslexia, and intellectual disability (mental retardation) in the child. A literature review will be conducted initially to address the current knowledge within the field. The main project will then afterwards be carried out as a population-based register study, using data from the Danish National Birth Cohort, The National school tests, The Danish Prescription Registry, and the Danish Psychiatric Central Registry. Data from these sources are linked to form a comprehensive research database, using the CPR numbers of the children. Analyses will focus on whether an overall association between exposures and outcomes can be found, as well as if timing, duration and extent of fever and infection are of importance to the neurodevelopment of the child. **Title of the thesis: Pregnancy related episodes of fever and infection and neurodevelopmental impairments in childhood**  
[http://www.sdu.dk/en/Om\\_SDU/Institutter\\_centre/Ist\\_sundhedstjenesteforsk/Forskning/Forskningsenheder/Sundhedsfremme/Ph,-d-,d-,d-,projekter](http://www.sdu.dk/en/Om_SDU/Institutter_centre/Ist_sundhedstjenesteforsk/Forskning/Forskningsenheder/Sundhedsfremme/Ph,-d-,d-,d-,projekter)

Julie Dreier

## graviditetsrelaterede episoder af infektioner og feber og neurokognitive udviklingsforstyrrelser hos barnet

Infektioner og feber under graviditeten er mistænkt for at have en negativ påvirkning på hjernens udvikling hos fostret og ind i barndommen. Formålet med dette ph.d.-projekt er derfor at undersøge hvorvidt infektion og/eller feber under graviditeten er associeret med barnets neurokognitive udvikling, målt ved tilstedeværelsen af forskellige lidelser og tilstande, som menes at være af neurokognitiv oprindelse, herunder attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), faglig præstation i skolen, ordblindhed og mental retardering. Projektet udføres som et populationsbaseret registerstudie, hvor data fra den danske fødselskohorte Bedre Sundhed for Mor og Barn (BSMB) vil blive sammenkoblet med data fra en række danske registre ved hjælp af børnenes CPR-nummer. Tilsammen vil disse informationer udgøre en omfattende forskningsdatabase, som bliver grundlag for de statistiske analyser. Resultaterne af projektet vil blive formidlet gennem videnskabelige publikationer, på konferencer og diskuteret i forbindelse med undervisning.

# scientific writing

course by Iain Patten



Our PhD students from both Health Promotion Unit and CMSS (and those to be) after a weeklong intensive scientific writing course led by Iain Patten in the end May at SDU, Esbjerg. From the left: Solveig Dohrmann, Anders Fournaise, Lulu Hjarnø, Stella Kræmer, Iain Patten, Maja Larsen, Julie Dreier, Metter Fredsgaard, Thomas Poulsen.

From the 27<sup>th</sup> of May through 31<sup>st</sup> of May we were eight juniors who were privileged to participate in a scientific writing course by Iain Patten. The main emphasis was to recognise good writing and how to produce good writing. The days were intense and homework was expected so at the end of the last day we treated ourselves with cake and Iain with a small thank you present. Following this course we have chosen to implement biweekly mandatory junior writing meetings, where we further develop our skills in writing and giving feedback.

Stella RJ Kræmer



# future events

kommende events

Research seminar program autumn 2013

17<sup>th</sup> September, 12.00-14.00. Unit Research Seminar:

“Human rights and Public Health “

by Professor Ann Taket

1<sup>st</sup> October, 12.00-14.00. PhD seminar:

“Health promotion challenges in the maritime setting “

by PhD student Lulu Hjarnø

8<sup>th</sup> October, 12.00-14.00. PhD seminar:

“National level Health Impact Assessment in Denmark“

by PhD student Stella Kræmer

29<sup>th</sup> October, 12.00-14.00. Campus seminar:

“Winter Olympics 2014 - What’s in it for me? “

by Morten Rodtwitt and Professor Jørn Hansen

Presentations are held at SDU Campus Esbjerg, Niels Bohrs Vej 9. Please follow the Unit website for the topics and speakers, calendars already now. For more information about the program and speakers [www.sdu.dk/healthpromotion](http://www.sdu.dk/healthpromotion)

# announcements

annonceringer

**M**aja Larsen will defend her PhD thesis "Use of evidence and intersectoral collaboration in local public health work in Denmark" on 19 August 2013 at 11.30 at University of Southern Denmark in Esbjerg, room 1A/1B.

The PhD thesis will be assessed by a committee comprising the following members; Professor Morten Grønæk (Chair), University of Southern Denmark, Professor Karsten Vrangæk, University of Copenhagen, and Professor Charli Eriksson, Örebro University.

**M**aja Larsen forsvarer sin Ph.d. afhandling "Use of evidence and intersectoral collaboration in local public health work in Denmark" den 19. august 2013 kl. 11.30 på Syddansk Universitet i Esbjerg, lokale 1A/1B.

Ph.d. afhandlingen bliver bedømt af en komite bestående af følgende medlemmer; Professor Morten Grønæk (Formand), Syddansk Universitet, Professor Karsten Vrangæk, Københavns Universitet, og Professor Charli Eriksson, Örebro Universitet.

# next publication

næste udgave

The next issue of HPR News will focus on how to collaborate between research and practice/policy to increase knowledge integration. This is interesting because it can deliver gains for both parties and for public health! Among other things, the issue will contain news from the REPOPA project (Research into Policy to enhance Physical Activity, [www.repopa.eu](http://www.repopa.eu)).

The next HPR News will be circulated in November 2013. Please forward contributions to Arja R Aro at [araro@health.sdu.dk](mailto:araro@health.sdu.dk) before the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2013.

Det næste nummer af HPR News vil fokusere på hvordan der kan samarbejdes mellem forskning og praksis/politik for at forbedre integration af viden. Et sådant samarbejde kan nemlig være til gevinst for begge parter og for folkesundheden! Blandt andet vil nummeret indeholde nyt fra REPOPA projektet (Research into Policy to enhance Physical Activity, [www.repopa.eu](http://www.repopa.eu)).

Det næste HPR News vil blive sendt ud november 2013. Fremsend venligst indlæg til Arja R Aro på [araro@health.sdu.dk](mailto:araro@health.sdu.dk) før d. 15. oktober 2013.