

NEWSLETTER – December 2021
Center for Primary Health Care Research
CPF



Christmas and other holidays are approaching, and I am happy to send out this newsletter with exciting news from CPF. CPF was founded in 2008 as a collaboration between Region Skåne and Lund University, both of which wanted to strengthen research in primary care. Since then, we have published more than 1,500 scientific articles and established 11 “Academic Healthcare Centers” (AVC) in Skåne, to promote research in clinical settings. Our success is a result of the many wonderful persons that work at CPF, our support from both Region Skåne and Lund University and our close bonds to the primary health care centres. Many thanks for 2021 and Happy New Year 2022!

Kristina Sundquist
Professor/Director
Center for Primary Health Care Research

Lovisa scoops best thesis prize!



CPF is celebrating the success of medical student, **Lovisa Ericsson (left)**, who won the Asklepios Prize for best Master's thesis in medicine in Sweden, 2021. Professor **Juan Merlo (right)** was the supervisor of the project.

Ericsson, who attends Lund University, won the prize for her thesis work “Understanding the complexity of socioeconomic differences in

physical activity in Sweden - an analysis of individual heterogeneity and discriminatory accuracy”.

The Asklepios Prize is awarded by the Swedish Medical Association's Candidate and Assistant Physician Association (KUF), which works to stimulate research interest and promote research initiatives among young doctors and students.

“Lovisa Ericsson showed how this innovative methodology can be used to develop public health reporting and illustrated this by analysing socioeconomic differences in physical activity in Sweden's population,” said Juan Merlo.



Congrats to Xiao and Mahdi for new appointments at Lund University

We extend our hearty congratulations to CPF's **Xiao Wang (left)** who has been appointed as Associate Professor at Lund University and to CPF's co-researcher **Mahdi Fallah (right)**, from the German Cancer Center, who has been appointed Guest Professor at Lund University.



Lifestyle change can prevent/postpone T2D & CVD complications – CPF study



Miriam Pikkemaat, Sara Larsson Lönn and Louise Bennet's study about diabetes among immigrants and native Swedes has examined insulin secretion and action as additional predictors for type 2 diabetes in populations of European and Middle Eastern ethnicities.

Their work has resulted in a recently published scientific article in the *Diabetes Metabolism Research and Reviews* journal.

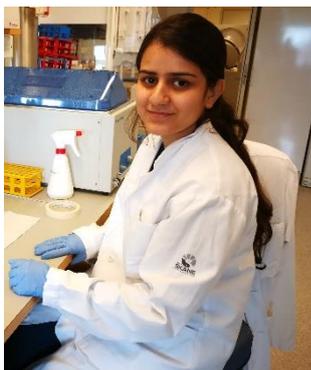
Using data from the MEDIM project (impact of Migration and Ethnicity on Diabetes In Malmö), the study found that insulin action and secretion - independent of traditional risk factors - predict new-onset type 2 diabetes in Iraqi and Swedish born citizens.

The participants were randomly selected from the census register and invited to the MEDIM project. Assessments were done using standard physical examinations, fasting blood samples including oral glucose tolerance tests, interviews regarding medication, comorbidity, family history of diabetes and lifestyle habits.

Data were linked from the national diabetes register to the MEDIM cohort to study the incidence of T2D) giving a cohort of 1164 Iraqi and 693 Swedish-born individuals.

“Early detection and non-pharmacological treatment such as lifestyle change can prevent or at least postpone onset of T2D or cardiovascular complications. In clinical practice, we suggest assessment of waist hip ratio rather than BMI to risk-stratify for T2D.” says Miriam Pikkemaat, the first author of this study.

Lab researchers land funding for projects



CPF's **Sakshi Vats (left)** has been awarded 98,000 Swedish kronor in funding from the Nilsson-Ehle Endowments.

In the proposed study, PhD student Vats will investigate the role of mitochondrial DNA methylation in abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA). For the purpose of this study, she plans to optimise a novel and relatively feasible experimental methodology that can be applied to other disease/study models.

“I am excited and extremely grateful to receive this grant. I'm also grateful for the support from my supervisors and colleagues that made it possible,” she said.

Lab colleague, **Yanni Li (right)**, also received funding (107,000 SEK) from the Nilsson-Ehle Endowments. The doctoral student's project is 'Reconstructing cancers through mammary differentiation of breast cancer derived induced pluripotent stem cells'.

“If successful, this reprogramming and differentiation project will help us understand more about cancer development and will work as a platform for potential therapeutic drug screening,” said Li.



Postdoc **Filip Jansåker** has received 350,000 kronor for a septicaemia project at CPF from the Thelma Zoégas foundation fund for medical research.

CPF's director, Professor **Kristina Sundquist**, has been awarded 2.4 million SEK in funding from the Swedish Heart-Lung Foundation and 2.4m from the Swedish Research Council for the new research project connected to the Targeted Health Dialogues in Skåne.

In 2020, Targeted Health Dialogues for 40-year-olds were introduced at Skåne's healthcare centres. The purpose is to prevent cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes in the population, which is done by paying attention to risk factors for each individual with the support of a so called health curve. The method also creates the conditions for structured lifestyle work at each healthcare centre.

The targeted health dialogues were implemented in Region Skåne by the Knowledge center for health behavior and prevention under the direction of Dr Malin Skogström. CPF leads the scientific studies where one can now, thanks to this support from the Heart-Lung Foundation and the Swedish Research Council, initiate the establishment of a new biobank with the purpose of identifying new molecular risk markers for cardiovascular disease and other serious diseases.

"I am extremely grateful for this trust from the Heart-Lung Foundation and Swedish Research Council, which enables this unique investment. The investment takes place within the framework of Region Skåne introducing an evidence-based method, Targeted Health Dialogues, to prevent cardiovascular disease," said Professor Kristina Sundquist. She added, "With the help of this research support, we now aim to be able to improve the preventive work even further by identifying biomarkers at the individual level that are examined in interaction with e.g. lifestyle factors."

PhD defence news

In December, **Christopher Nilsson** defended his PhD thesis on the subject of 'Aspects of ethnicity on blood pressure regulating mechanisms and kidney function in a defined population'. Louise Bennet was the main supervisor.

In January, **Jon Pallon** (January 21) will defend his PhD thesis on the subject 'Pharyngotonsillitis in primary health care - Aetiology and clinical findings.' The main supervisor is Katarina Hedin.

KS doctoral student **Per-Ola Forsberg** (11 February), who is finishing his specialist medical education at the same time as he is having his defence, will be defending his PhD thesis in February on the subject 'Neighborhood Effects on Cardiovascular Health'. The main supervisor is Professor Kristina Sundquist

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