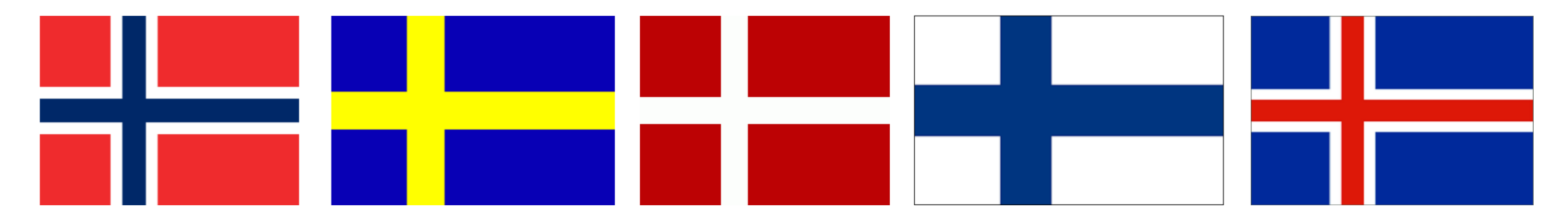


Impact of the Nordic Specialist Course on the development of Palliative Medicine in the Nordic countries

A survey among 150 participants from five courses 2003-2013

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on behalf of the Steering Group of the Nordic Specialist Course in Palliative Medicine



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Background

The Associations for Palliative Medicine in the five Nordic countries have since 2003 organized a theoretical specialist training course in palliative medicine. The course consists of 6 week-long modules over 2 years, covering all major topics in palliative medicine.

Course participants must be approved in a relevant medical specialty. To obtain the course diploma, the participants must attend all modules, complete a limited research project, hand in an assignment after each module, and pass the final, written exam.

Aim

To examine the impact of this educational program on the participants and on the field of palliative medicine in the Nordic countries.

Method

A web-based survey was sent to the physicians who had completed the first five courses 2003-2013 (n=150).

Results

The response rate was 84% (n=126). 64% were women. Before attending the course, 45% worked in a local/regional hospital, 35% in a university hospital, and 20% in primary care. 93% obtained the course diploma.

After the course

- 70% had attended one or more palliative care conferences
- 26% had presented an abstract from the course project at a conference
- 13% had published a paper from the course project in a peer-reviewed journal

- 84% are currently working in a clinical palliative care setting, 56% as leaders
- 91% teach palliative medicine
- 41% participate in developing national guidelines for palliative care
- 49% are active in their national palliative medicine association
- 39% take part in lobbying activities for palliative care

Conclusion

The Nordic Specialist Course in Palliative Medicine has had a profound impact on participants' post-course careers and most are now working within palliative medicine as leaders, teachers and activists.

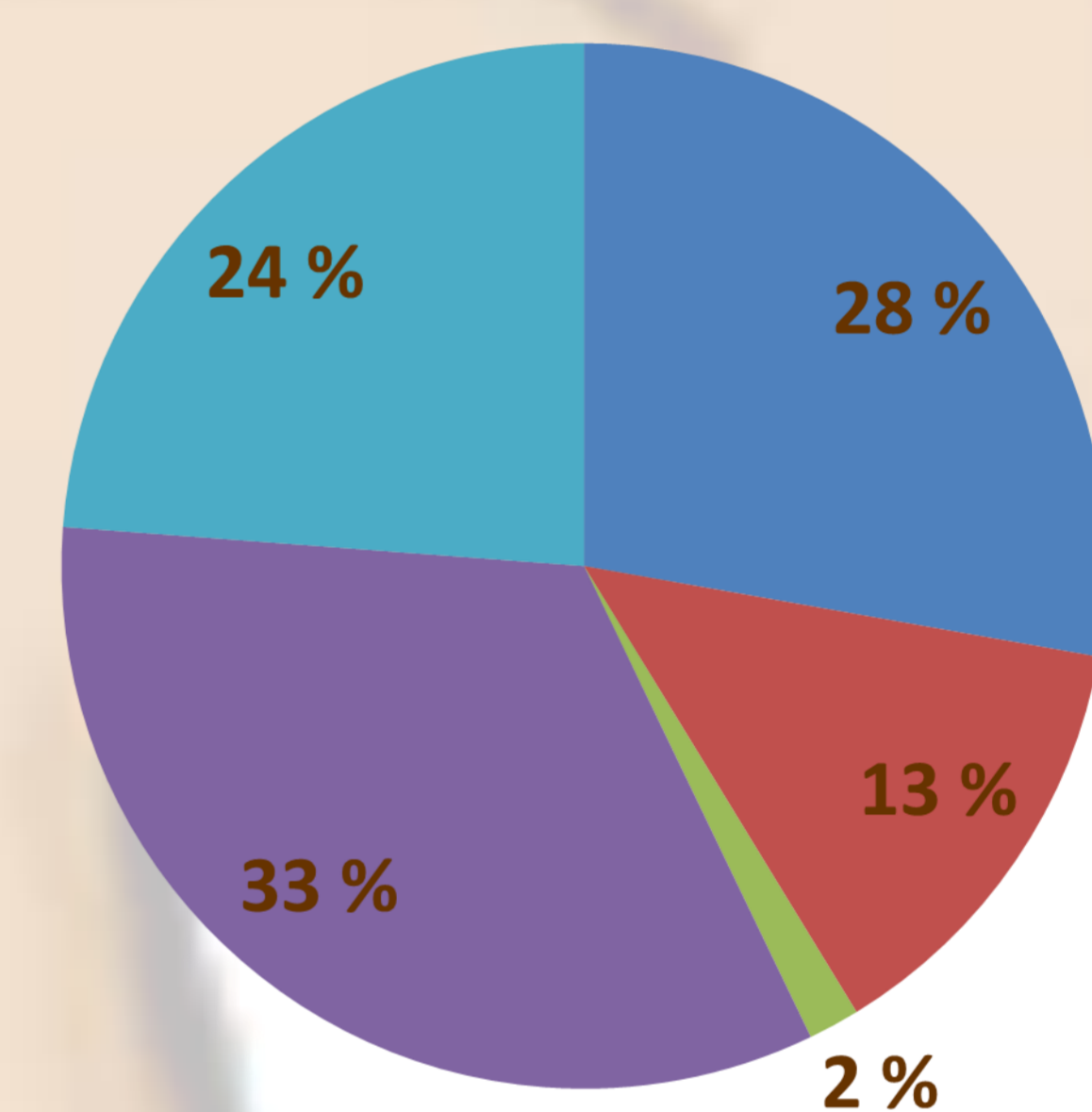
Palliative medicine has been approved as a formal competence field or subspecialty in Finland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden and expected in Iceland 2015/2016. In all countries, the Nordic course, or an equivalent course, is required for the theoretical part.



NSCPM Steering Group 2013-2016

Nationality of the course participants (n=126):

■ Denmark ■ Finland ■ Iceland ■ Norway ■ Sweden



Pre-course medical specialty of the participants (n=126):

Medical Specialty	n
General practice	27
Internal medicine*	26
Anesthesiology	23
Oncology	22
Geriatrics	16
Surgery*	9
Gynecology	5
Neurology	2
Psychiatry	1
No specialty**	7
Two specialties	12
* Including all subspecialties	** Finland