

2022 Annual Report from Nordic Cognition Network in Relation to Deafblindness

Membership:

NO: Kirsten H Costain, Joe Gibson, Torill Gullvik, Annika Maria Johannessen, Jude Nicholas, Lynn Skei, Elena Hauge, Anne Nafstad, Magnus Tollefsrud, Camilla Lyngar, Eline F Melhuus.

SE: Maria Nilsson (new member).

FI: Emmi Toumi

DK: Ulrik Skov Hansen, Lone Rømer, Tanja Christiansen.

NL: Saskia Damen.

GB: Jacky Smith, Jonathan Reid, Paul Hart

(20 members across 6 countries).

Members leaving the network:

SE: Vuokko Einarsson

Meetings and activities in 2021

Cognition Network meetings held online on:

- 14th June: summary and discussion about the experiences from the webinars during the spring.
- 6th September: presentation from Kirsten Costain, senior adviser
- 30th November: presentation from Professor John Ravenscroft and Dr Jude Nicholas

Activity

The Nordic Cognition Network in Relation to Deafblindness was established in 2008. The main aim of the network is to promote professional competency in understanding cognitive development and identifying cognitions and their relation to learning and everyday functioning of individuals with congenital deafblindness (CDB).

Some members of the network are affiliated to different universities, conducting research, and collaborating with other professionals in the field of CDB. The other members are clinicians and practitioners working in the field, consisting of psychologists, educational specialists and supervisors who are involved in conducting assessments and intervention

planning in the different countries. Since congenital deafblindness comprises a diverse, small-scale and heterogeneous group it is important that the collaboration and knowledge sharing of Cognition in Relation to Congenital Deafblindness takes place in a Nordic and international manner. Furthermore, the knowledge developed from this network is considered feasible in its application to other related fields.

The network has developed further in 2021, building upon the launch and publication of the book “Revealing Hidden Potentials – Assessing Cognition in Individuals with Congenital Deafblindness” in 2020, and the resulting series of webinars which highlighted the themes and knowledge of the network. In 2021 there were two webinars from following chapters: *Humour and playfulness within social cognition* and *Climbing the wall: Assessment of cognition through video analysis*. You will find all the webinars here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBjRXGXUXsRtclXG7BRt1utL0v4FgyyVv>

In 2022 we have looked to develop our own thinking and, following a survey of group members, we decided not to publish again this year, but to spend time unpacking the learning from the publication and webinar series, and exploring certain themes.

Network member Kirsten H Costain developed some excellent work and presented on Deep-Learning Software which can be a significant tool within the world of video-analysis, intersubjective interdependence and congenital deafblind research methodology.

Professor John Ravenscroft from The University of Edinburgh gave a fascinating lecture on his work in the field of CVI to the network, and in response, Dr Jude Nicholas highlighted his own research into the potentials for an interdependence between CVI and APD. This development will inform much of the thinking of the Cognition Network going forward.

During a network meeting, Jude Nicholas gave a brief description on the first supervisor training course on the Tactile Working Memory Scale (TWMS), which was attended by 16 professionals from 8 European countries. The TWMS is also a chapter in the book “Revealing Hidden Potentials”. Furthermore, Annika Maria Johannessen gave a short presentation on an ongoing Nordic project which focuses on developing materials for the identification of deafblindness. Specifically, items from the TWMS are being considered in this project.

The network will look to continue this Nordic and international collaboration and develop the thinking of the network within the architecture of the deafblind field and beyond. Further webinars are planned for the next year which will look to complete our series based on the publication “Revealing Hidden Potentials”, and we will look to continue our collaboration and outreach to other groups and areas of interest. This helps the network to develop in synergy with complimentary areas of research and practice, and to continue to promote the field of deafblindness and the work of the Nordic Cognition Network in relation to Deafblindness to the widest of audiences.

The Nordic Cognition Network in Relation to Deafblindness is planning to give a presentation at the Nordic conference on deafblindness during the hour of the NVC’s Networks.

On behalf of the network I would like to extend our gratitude and thanks to NVC and especially Maria Creutz, Christina Lindström and Nina Stens for all their support. I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Maria Creutz, who is leaving her position for pastures new, for all of her incredibly hard work, thoughtfulness and professionalism over the years. This network has been forged and supported so well by her. Thank you Maria, on behalf of us all.

On behalf of members of the network,

Jonathan Reid,
Glasgow, May 2022,

The Health and Social Care Alliance (Scotland).