

THE NORDIC COUNCIL FOR ARCTIC MEDICAL RESEARCH

history, aims and achievements

ABSTRACT

Bent Harvald¹
and Inge Lyng²

The Organization of Nordic Council for Arctic Medical Research (NCAMR, or NoSAMF in Scandinavian languages) was initiated by the governmental Nordic Council in 1966. The new council was charged with the task of promoting arctic medical research in the Nordic countries. It began its duties in 1969. Originally the council covered Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden; Iceland joined as a member in 1977. During the first years the NCAMR held two to three conferences a year, the proceedings of which were communicated in the Nordic Council for Arctic Medical Research Reports series, distributed in about 1500 copies, free of charge. In 1971, 1981, 1987 and 1993, the NCAMR hosted the *International Congress on Circumpolar Health* and played a pivotal role in the establishment of the International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH) in 1986. Thereafter, the activities of the NCAMR developed a much more international character. Accident prevention, cold research, pollution, family health and, in later years, the health of indigenous peoples, became priorities, along with the establishment of international research networks. The NCAMR's report series soon developed into an established international journal under the title Arctic Medical Research. The inter-governmental financial support to the NCAMR was discontinued at the end of 1996. Thereafter, the secretariat operated under the auspices of the University of Oulu. The International Journal for Circumpolar Health, as it was named from 1997, continued to flourish, being published by the IUCH, the Nordic Society for Circumpolar Health and the University of Oulu.

¹ Professor emeritus, Odense University

² Former chief psychiatrist in Greenland

Key words: Arctic medical history, Nordic collaboration, IUCH, International Journal of Circumpolar Health