"En vetenskaplig disciplin består av forskare som tvistar, granskar, kritiserar, inspirerar och stöttar varandra och seminarium är disciplinens lokala manifestation”

(Högskoleverket 2006)
Maternal and reproductive ill-health is one of the most common causes of illness and death among women between the ages 15 and 49. This stands as an obstacle to fulfilling the objectives of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, especially the 5th aiming towards reduced maternal mortality and improved access to reproductive health care.

The overall aim of the research group International Maternal and Reproductive Health & Migration is to investigate sexual and reproductive health and rights from a global, migration and human rights perspective in order to develop tools for comprehensive health services. The group has several on-going community- and hospital-based research projects in different parts of the world. To define the complexity of reproductive ill-health covering biomedical, social, cultural and legal aspects, we use interdisciplinary and mixed methods; including epidemiology, clinical audit and theoretical constructions based in social science.

One of three WHO Collaborating Centres in Scandinavia for research on human reproduction is placed at Department of Women’s and Children’s Health, and linked to our research group. We are also linked to the Immigrant Well Women’s Clinic at the Department of Women’s Health, Uppsala University Hospital.

3 PhD students have defended their thesis recently and 4 new students have been registered in the group.
Global and Academic Width & Depth

The research group consists of researchers from different academic backgrounds and nationalities. This mix gives the group a strength, width and depth that is crucial for quality research in an international setting.

Maternal Mortality and Severe Obstetric Morbidity in a Globalised World
Research activities: Analyses of maternal and perinatal ill-health in low-, middle- and high-income settings from a migration perspective. Partner’s role in the provision of support during antenatal and obstetric decision-making as an influence on birth outcome. Location: Rwanda, Tanzania, Sweden

Too many caesarean deliveries challenge Safe Motherhood?
Research activities: Hospital based audits, use of demographic health surveillance site, interviews of mothers at hospital delivery and follow-up; maternal and child outcomes, and interviews with parents and doctors to explore decision making, attitudes, birth experiences and health economic analysis. Location: Tanzania, Sweden

Genitals, gender and ethnicity: The Politics of Genital Modifications
Research Activities: Through discourse analysis we will explore the social values about 'sex' and 'gender' that are conveyed in legal decisions and medical practice in the field of surrogacy, female circumcision, cosmetic genital surgery, and in other discourses. Location: Sweden, India

Increased access to comprehensive abortion care in India
Research activities: Several community- and hospital-based projects using interdisciplinary and mixed methods to define the complexity of abortion provision in India. Studies such as exploring future physician’s attitudes and perceptions towards abortion and contraception, health care providers’ perceptions on pregnancy and comprehensive abortion care, decision-making in reproductive health, and a randomised control trial assessing simplified medical abortion. Location: India

Daily life and wellbeing of irregular immigrants detained in Sweden
Research activities: Qualitative methods will be employed to create awareness of care of detainees. Areas covered include everyday life experiences and the perceived well-being of detainees. Moreover, exploring of staff’s and detainee’s perspectives of the care provided at the detention unit. Location: Sweden

Unaccompanied Somali refugee girls in Sweden
Research activities: To document and analyse how a group of unaccompanied girls from Somalia look back on their first years in Sweden as young adults. More specifically how they experienced the reception of the authorities and the Swedish health care system. Also, their perceived self-health and present social network in Sweden. This is useful in the development of guidelines by authorities and caretakers. Location: Sweden
Group Members & Collaborating Centres

**Group Members**

**Head of the research group:**
Birgitta Essén

**Research fellows:**
Magdalena Bjerneld
Marie Klingberg-Allvin
Mattias Rööst
Pauline Binder
Hussein Lesio Kidanto
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**PhD students**
Andrew Mgaya
Anna Arvidsson
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Helena Litorp
Jessica Påfs
Jonna Arousell
Mandira Paul
Soheila Mohammadi
Soorej Jose Puthoopparambil
Ulrika Byrskog

**Research assistant**
Christina Pedersen
Anna Wahlberg

**Collaborating centres**

Karolinska institutet: Prof. Kristina Gemzell
Malmö Högskola: Sara Johndotter & Aje Carlbom
Uppsala universitet: Inst. for folkhäls- & vårdvetenskap
AIIMS and the WHO collaborating centre, New Delhi: Prof Suneeta Mittal
ARTH Udaipur: Dr Sharad Iyengar
Ipas India: Vinoj Manning, MD
Muhimbili National Hospital, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania:
Hussein Kidanto, MD, PhD
Läkare utan gränser – MSF
National University of Rwanda (NUR):
Prof. Joseph Vyankakander & Dr Stephen Rulisa
Umeå University:
Lennarth Nyström, University lector, Public Health and Clinical Medicine
Universidad Nacional Autóoma de Nicaragua
UNAN - Leon, Nicaragua: Eliette Valladares, Post doc
Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences/
Infertility Reproductive Health Research Center:
Dr. Masoumeh Fallahian
**Severe maternal morbidity in Rwanda**
The project is focusing on exploring severe maternal morbidity during pregnancy in Rwanda. The aim is to explore women’s health seeking behaviour, and the involvement of their partner, when experiencing severe complications during pregnancy; to explore maternal health care workers’ views and their experiences of severe maternal morbidity at the three hospitals in Kigali; to investigate the discourse on near miss in early pregnancy in this urban setting.

**Evaluating helping babies breathe: training for healthcare workers at hospitals in Rwanda**
*PhD Students: Amaible Musafili & Jessica Påfs*

**Trauma and violence related reproductive health among Somali refugee women in Sweden**
Refugee women in reproductive ages face several challenges during migration such as navigating in an unknown maternity health care system and elevated levels of pregnancy related morbidity, especially seen among Somali refugee women. Added is a history with increased risks of possible violence exposure as an effect of war and also of being submitted to intimate partner violence in the refugee situation. In this project, perceptions and experiences during migration and possible enabling factors enhancing the health and wellbeing of Somali women in the new setting are identified. Informants are newly arrived Somali refugee women and antenatal midwives working in multi-cultural settings and the approach mainly qualitative.
*PhD Student: Ulrica Byrskog*
**Daily life and wellbeing of irregular immigrants detained in Sweden**

Sweden receives a major share of asylum seekers in the world. Most European countries use detention centres in order to facilitate deportation of captured irregular migrants. The time spent in these units can vary and has a big impact on the detainees, whose health situation is already deteriorated. To better understand the needs of the detainees studies are carried out to create a knowledge base for the development of the care and support provided in the detention units. The objectives are to describe how the detainees experience the daily life, well-being and received care. To describe the staff’s perspectives on the care provided and to identify factors that influence the well-being of the detainees.

**Unaccompanied Somali refugee girls in Sweden, a follow-up study**

Sweden have received unaccompanied children since the end of the 80’s. Among these Somali children constitutes one of the largest groups. Majority are boys but a third of the children are girls. The overall aim with this study is to follow-up on interviews conducted with Somali girls in 1998-99. This time it is conducted to document and analyse how these girls look back on their first years in Sweden as young adults. More specifically topics such as reception by the Swedish authorities and health care system will be explored along with their perception of how they rate their own health and how they have developed their social network in Sweden. This knowledge aims to strengthen the authorities in their reception of future unaccompanied children.
Congresses & Detention centers around Europe
Workshops and disseminations with different immigrant communities in Europe
Jonna Arousell, PhD Student, presenting her pilot interviews about young muslims in south of Sweden and their way of gathering information about sexuality and family planning. This was presented in one of the research groups many seminars, that was held in Falsterbo 2013.
India collaboration

Maternal mortality has decreased in India over the past decade and huge efforts have been put into promoting delivery in the hospital. However, less focus has been put on the deaths from abortions, estimated to account for 20% of the maternal deaths.

The research group has several projects running in different parts of India. Two major partner-driven cooperations (PDCs) funded by SIDA related to comprehensive abortion care and some additional studies looking into surrogacy in India.

The first PDC is between the NGO Ipas India and Department of Women's and Children's Health, Uppsala University and has set out to increase access to comprehensive abortion care in the public health system in the states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Assam through strengthened partnership between India and Sweden. The joint research activities on evaluating attitudes can help to build on the ongoing policy work made by Ipas within the country and developing a pool of advocates to influence policy on mid-level providers in abortion services. *PhD Student: Susanne Sjöström & research assistant: Christina Pedersen*

The other PDC there is rolled out as a collaboration between the two Departments of Women's and Children's health in both Uppsala University and Karolinska Institutet that together are partnering with the NGO ARTH Udaipur, Action Research and Training for Health located in south of Rajasthan in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health. This PDC aims to increase the access and awareness of comprehensive abortion care in general with an emphasise on medical abortion. The research activities include a randomised control trial comparing simplified follow-up after medical abortion in a low-resource setting with the standard clinical follow-up two weeks after a medical abortion. This is combined with qualitative studies. Along with this advocacy work is carried out as well as training of doctors and nurses in medical abortion from public health facilities. *PhD student: Mandira Paul*

The third study is exploring perceptions of surrogacy among women and men in Assam. *PhD Student: Anna Arvidson*

Outcomes are sharing of knowledge and experience by the faculty members of the two countries, which will help in enhancing the knowledge base and implementing best practices into the teaching systems, service provision and policy.
Assam
Maharashtra & Madya Pradesh
Udaipur Rajasthan, India
Too many caesarean deliveries challenge Safe Motherhood

There is a global trend of increasing rates of caesarean delivery due to such reasons as medicalisation, economic incitements, safe motherhood is not implied. Hospital caesarean section rates of 24-75% are reported from Latin America, Asia and Africa. This project is focused in Iran and Tanzania.

The study designs are hospital based audits, demographic health surveillance sites, interviews with mothers upon hospital delivery, maternal and child outcomes and sampling of parents and doctors decision-making and attitudes towards pregnancy and giving birth.

PhD Students:
Helena Litorp, Soheila Mohammadi, Andrew Mgaya
Data Collection - Iran
Data collection - Tanzania
The research group have several collaborations with academic institutions in Sweden and abroad. The PhD Students in the group are based in different parts of Sweden as well as globally. This picture is from The University of Dalarna where Fatumo, Marie and Ulrika are based.
Collaborations with other academic institutions
The research group meets annually for seminars. This is to create networks with other researchers in the field as well as to build skills within the group. Together we reflect upon the work that each researcher is carrying out, sharing experiences and giving support.

Here is 2013's seminar in Falsterbo focusing on discourse analysis.
Workshop in Rosengård 2013

Training in Medical Abortion, Udaipur, Rajasthan 2013

Workshop in Rosengård 2013

Methods seminar in Delhi 2013

SRHR Workshop in Jaipur 2009

Seminare in Falsterbo 2013

Brainstorming at IMCH 2009

Workshop in Assam 2013

Scientific network meeting 2010
Congress & Scientific Presentation
Dissertations

Mattias Rööst
“Pre-hospital Barriers to Emergency Obstetric Care: Studies of Maternal Mortality and Near-miss in Bolivia and Guatemala” (2010)

Pauline Binder

William Ugarte
“Averting HIV and AIDS epidemic in Nicaragua: Studies of prevalence, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour” (2013)
The Research group - Daily life at IMCH
Women are not dying because of diseases we cannot prevent or treat. They are dying because societies have yet to make the decision that their lives are worth saving.

~ Mohamed Fathalla
Thank You!