

**Dear MIDDEL colleagues,**

*Here is an informal update on the MIDDEL-project, and our No. 1 Christmas newsletter: The photo below sums it all up!*

I think it's safe to say that the year 2020 was not what any of us expected. Was it the right time to start a European multicentre cluster-randomized trial? Perhaps not... But it was certainly the right time for other things, such as increasing the focus on mental health and wellbeing among elderly care home residents, and to brainstorm about possible ways to adapt an intervention to lockdowns. This year has also been a crash course in online conferencing, and we have gotten a virtual tour of most of our colleagues' living rooms/home offices. The Norwegian saying "det er aldri så galt at det ikke er godt for noe" comes to mind (the English equivalent of this phrase says something about silver linings).

I am glad that many of us got to meet in person in Vienna early in the year. The project was kicked off, and although no care homes have been included in the European part of MIDDEL yet, we have all been busy with preparations that need to be in order before further steps would be possible. Some of these include:

#### **The DSMC**

The MIDDEL Data Safety and Monitoring Committee was established this spring, and consists of Associate Professor Teppo Särkämö (chair) from the University of Helsinki, Professor Bettina Husebø from the University of Bergen, and Professor Inger Hilde Nordhus from the University of Bergen. The committee had their initial meetings in March and April where they did a protocol review, discussed the role of the DSMC and variables for the interim reports. They met again in October to review the first report, which mainly consisted of data from the Australian part of the project. Meeting minutes can be found in Dropbox MIDDEL>ADMINISTRATION.

#### **Ethics approvals**

Ethics applications in Germany and Norway have both been approved and archived. We know that more of you have been working on your applications this autumn. Please let us know if you need anything else from the Norwegian team, and [send us your ethical approvals once they are attained.](#)

#### **Website, Facebook page and logo**

Our website <https://www.middel-project.eu> saw the light of day this year. It has been updated with information from all countries, and we will continue to add publications, conference presentations and other information and happenings as they come. If you are on Facebook, please follow the project there to receive updates and relevant news: <https://www.facebook.com/MIDDELproject>. Our MIDDEL logo was also born this year, and can be used in e.g. presentations, letters, and e-mail signatures. It comes with various additional graphic elements including the illustration with four heads that symbolize our target group and interventions, and five lines that may represent the lines in a music sheet, or the five European countries in the project. See Dropbox folder MIDDEL>ADMINISTRATION>Logo and website.

#### **REDCap**

After running on OpenClinica since May 2018, NORCE switched to the electronic data capture system REDCap this year. The development of the data model for MIDDEL started in spring, with the goal to make it similar to the OC-version but with some changes and improvements to the interface. Case report forms for residents, staff and care home units have now been set up, and data will be entered into the same system from all countries. Each country will however have to translate the material to their language (and find the correct versions of existing translated instruments) for their assessment packs, before the data collection itself will be possible.

### **RCS/GMT manuals**

The German and Dutch team have been busy with the important task of putting together manuals and training materials for our interventions, in relation to WP2 and WP3. The manuals can be found in our Dropbox folder MIDDEL>INTERVENTIONS. When each of us have established our local teams of interventionists, these will receive online training to ensure that choir singing and music therapy can be performed correctly and similarly across the various countries.

### **Recruitment plans and retention rates**

Keeping an overview of recruitment and retention is a part of WP1, and I have been in touch with some of you semiregularly to hear about your progress in recruitment planning. While all the European countries plan to start including participants in 2021, the Netherlands and Norway have had contact with care homes who wish to participate. I think we are all well aware of the balance between initiating contact to inform and facilitate recruitment, while not "scaring care homes into declining". Of course, the COVID-19 rates and the related measures vary across our countries, and each of us know best what is the most beneficial recruitment strategy in our respective locations. We will know more as the vaccination progresses—2021 will be an exciting year!

Meanwhile, our Australian MIDDEL colleagues have done a formidable job to follow-up their 20 care home units in spite of the difficult situation, and will soon be starting the process of writing up their results. Assessments at baseline and 3-month follow-up were completed in all 20 CHUs, 6-month follow-up was possible in 18 of them, and the last assessments at 12-month follow-up are being finalized as we speak.

### **European MIDDEL partners meeting**

Early next year it will be time for a new EU partners meeting, to discuss the various measures in our countries, how they can impact the interventions, and plans for 2021. The date is not set yet, as we are awaiting feedback from some of you. We will get back with a date ASAP, but so far it looks like Jan 26<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup> may be the best candidates.

This year we have also greeted several new members of the local teams in our various countries. Welcome to MIDDEL! Here in our Norwegian team, we would like to thank Brynjulf Stige who will be leaving the project and be off on new adventures in the new year—although he will still have a role as an advisor. He has been an important part of our team and aided in contact with the municipalities, care homes, and music therapists in Norway.

I could mention so much more in this newsletter, but I think this will be it for now. I hope you all enjoy some time off in the days to come, and I look forward to collaborate with you in the new year.

Happy Holidays!

Best wishes,  
Vigdis, on behalf of the Norwegian MIDDEL team

# The MIDD<sub>EL</sub> Christmas newsletter

## 2020 YEAR -IN- REVIEW



Currently

**20** CHUs 

with a total of **318** residents

Misc. data:

PAPERS & PRESENTATIONS 5

FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS 56

DAYS IN HOME OFFICE 287

PANDEMICS SURVIVED 1

### 2020 highlights / favorite moments

- Vienna meeting
- New website
- RCS/GMT manuals
- New logo
- DSMC established
- REDCap set up

Merry Christmas Frohe Weihnachten Mutlu Noeller Zalig Kerstfeest God jul!

