

## Preface

# Scandinavian orthopedics by the year 2000

Health reports from the industrialized countries indicate almost exponential growth in the demand for orthopedic services. Two factors seem to contribute to the increasing impact of orthopedics on health care programs.

First, technical achievements have enabled orthopedic surgeons to restore function in disorders not previously amenable to effective treatment, notably prosthetic joint replacements. Secondly, increasing sick-leave morbidity and early disability retirements due to musculoskeletal diseases have placed a heavy economic burden on society. Hence, there is a growing demand for accurate orthopedic assessment of musculoskeletal disorders to clarify the boundary between age-related phenomena and true locomotor disease.

In the Scandinavian countries—Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden—with 23 million inhabitants, both the changing pattern of disease and

the increasing consumption of health services have been continuously recorded during the past few decades. In addition, a number of studies have been launched to further assess the needs of orthopedic health care. Scandinavia is a unique region for health care studies because of extensive and uniformly compiled statistical data on health and disease.

The present supplement of *Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica* contains a series of papers on orthopedic diseases and health care that were presented at a symposium in Helsinki, Finland, in 1988. Special emphasis was focused on presumptive data for the year 2000 in Scandinavia. The papers do not pretend to solve the orthopedic health care problems that are ahead; instead, it is hoped that they will stimulate further research on the changing problems of orthopedic disorders in the community.

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