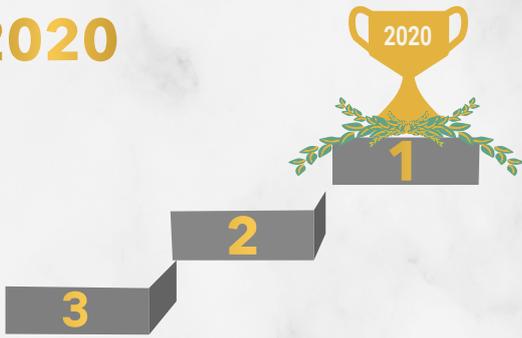




Outstanding Nordic PhD Awards 2020



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University of Oslo, Norway
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The perspective of the Editorial Board



Criteria

All dissertations defended in the Nordic region between January 1 and December 31, 2020, were eligible for nomination for the 2020 Outstanding PhD Awards. Nominations had to be submitted to *Oftalmolog* before October 1, 2021. Nominations were accepted both from anyone.

We have decided to use the sum total of the CiteScores for each article included in the thesis. Review articles were excluded from the calculations. Although literature reviews are also valuable, not all universities accept these as thesis components. Additionally, journals solely focused on reviews generally have a higher CiteScore due to the nature of their content. Thus, by excluding reviews, we aimed to make comparisons fairer.

All papers accepted for publication by a journal prior to the submission of the thesis to the university were included in the calculation. Manuscripts included in the thesis that were not accepted by a journal at the time of thesis submission were not included in the total CiteScore.

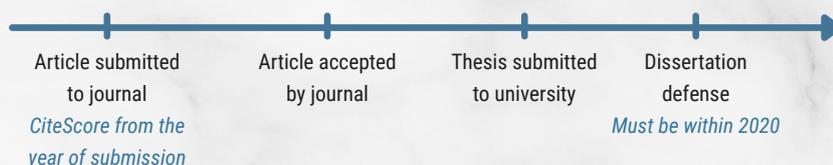
The CiteScore for each included article was determined based on the year the individual article was submitted to the given journal. For example, if a manuscript was submitted in 2018, the 2018 CiteScore was used, even if the paper was not published until 2019.

What is a CiteScore?

CiteScore is one of many metrics used to evaluate the impact of a journal. It was developed by Scopus, a subsidiary of Elsevier. Elsevier has created many metrics and databases, which can be useful for evaluating the quality of scientific publications.

The main benefits of using CiteScore include (1) it is stable and robust as it takes into account the citations over the past four years, which is important when comparing these with articles published in different years and (2) most publications are indexed in Scopus. More information and all CiteScores can be found at <https://www.scopus.com/sources>.

Timeline for articles eligible for consideration for the Outstanding PhD Award



Only papers accepted prior to submission of thesis were included



<https://www.scopus.com/sources>



Main takeaway:

Although keratoconus is an eye disease, patients also exhibit systemic-level differences. This was seen both in the associated diseases and in that keratoconus patients had significantly lower levels of prolactin-induced protein compared to controls in tear fluid, saliva, and plasma.

“ Advice to aspiring PhDs:

My number-one piece of advice is to choose your main supervisor wisely—ideally, work with them beforehand. Apart from yourself, your supervisor and the collaboration between the two of you is key to succeeding with your PhD studies. I have been very fortunate in this regard with my main supervisor.



Total
CiteScore:
19.2



Sashia Bennett, née Bak-Nielsen
Aarhus University, Denmark
Keratoconus - epidemiology and changes in biomarkers

Future directions:

Following my PhD defense, I started my residency in ophthalmology. At the moment, my main focus is becoming a skilled clinical ophthalmologist. I also have a few “spin-off” projects from my PhD that I’m still working on, in addition to being a co-supervisor for master thesis students.

Inspiration for topic:

I got into research and the area of keratoconus gradually. My master thesis focused on keratoconus, this then evolved, first, into a pre-graduate research year, and later into a PhD. As with many things in life, the more knowledge you have, the more interesting a subject area becomes.

“ Main takeaway:

Patients with dry eye disease had a significantly reduced quality of life. We revealed that oxidative stress may play a role in dry eye pathophysiology and that tear metabolomics could be important for discovering biomarkers of dry eye disease.

Total
CiteScore:
19.2

Inspiration for topic:

I was inspired to pursue this research upon learning that dry eye disease is substantially underdiagnosed and that effective treatment modalities are lacking. I hope I am able to contribute to more effective diagnostics and therapeutics for this debilitating disease.

Future directions:

I am honored to receive *Oftalmolog's* Outstanding Nordic PhD Award. This means a lot and inspires me to continue my research on dry eye disease. I am very grateful to be part of a group of brilliant researchers and clinicians. I hope that this is just the beginning, and I aspire to continue research aiming to improve the accuracy of dry eye diagnosis and treatment.

Advice to aspiring PhDs:

Do not spend too much time debating whether you want to do research. Just start! Choose a challenge that interests you. We spend too much time thinking about actions rather than acting. Keep your curiosity awake and question the state of the art. Just work hard, and the PhD itself will be a byproduct. During the process, you will gain life experience that will enable you to excel in your field of expertise.



Behzod Tashbayev
University of Oslo, Norway
In Search of Diagnostic Markers of Dry Mouth and Dry Eye Disease



Second place:
NOK 30,000



Total
CiteScore:
18.6



Sanna Leinonen
University of Helsinki, Finland
Treatment and complications of juvenile idiopathic arthritis-related uveitis

Main takeaway:

Prognosis in JIA-uveitis improves when inflammation is well controlled with anti-rheumatic treatment. I learned that complications can be avoided in JIA-uveitis with better treatment choices.

Advice to aspiring PhDs:

My advice is that if you want to have a better, deeper understanding of the diseases that you treat, clinical research is the way to go. Also, PhD research will connect you with a network of clinicians to lean on!

“ Inspiration for topic:

My inspiration for this research were my young patients suffering from JIA-uveitis. I wanted to better treat my patients with uveitis-related complications, and I felt like I was missing something! I needed this research to learn about uveitis and to guide me in clinical decision-making. I was very lucky to follow Dr. Kotaniemi's path in uveitis research and to collaborate with an amazing group of experienced researchers at Helsinki University Hospital.

Future directions:

I am continuing my research in uveitis, focusing in uveitis related to multiple sclerosis and sarcoidosis in addition to JIA-uveitis.

We are very grateful to our generous sponsor, **Santen**, which provides the funding for the Outstanding Nordic PhD Awards. With their support, we are able to highlight some of the brightest minds and young leaders in their disciplines.

 **Imagine Your Happiness**

More information on the award can be found on our website,
www.oftalmolog.com.



Third place:
NOK 15,000



Anne Willerslev
University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Non-invasive assessment of changes in retinal vessels, blood flow and blood composition



Total
CiteScore:
18.4

Inspiration for topic:

Hemodynamics has always interested me, but, when I decided to go into ophthalmology, I was not sure how to combine this with retinal research. I knew that systemic vascular disease could cause visible changes in the retinal microvasculature, but it had never been investigated using OCT scans. It seemed obvious to see whether information about blood flow could be extracted from OCT scans, both in healthy human subjects and in patients with abnormalities of flow. So, it turned out to be my dream topic!

Advice to aspiring PhDs:

Be curious and pursue the topics that really interest you—the rest will follow.

Main takeaway:

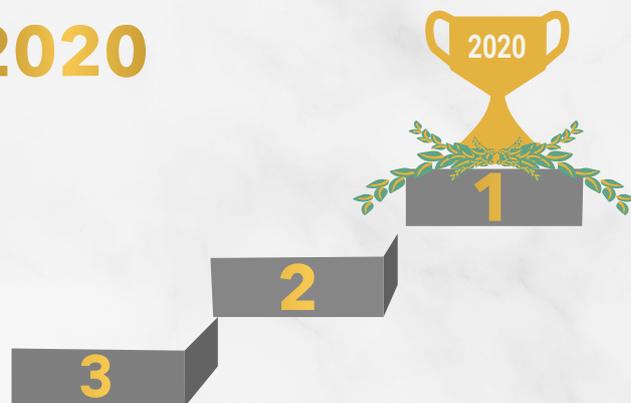
Retinal blood vessels with undisturbed blood flow have characteristic intravascular flow profiles on OCT. The vascular OCT profiles can be visibly altered by turbulent blood flow, hypoperfusion, and abnormal composition of the blood. My methodological studies show that OCT scans of retinal vessels may contain more information than we currently use.

Future directions:

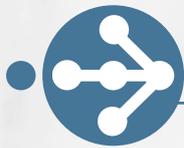
I will continue to do research. We are currently working on a very interesting paper examining alterations of the OCT profiles in arteritis temporalis. My dream is to plan larger studies with a much more ambitious set-up to study the effect of conditions like anemia, hyperlipidemia, or carotid stenosis on the vascular OCT profiles.

Would you like to be considered for the 2021 Outstanding Nordic PhD Award? Visit our website at oftalmolog.com for more information.

Outstanding Nordic PhD Awards 2020



For video presentations of the Outstanding Nordic PhD Awards, please visit our website.



The 2021 nominees, so far...



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Rigshospitalet-Glostrup, Denmark
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Mads Forslund Jacobsen
Rigshospitalet-Glostrup, Denmark
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to ensure technical competence in
cataract surgery*

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University of Oslo, Norway
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University of Copenhagen, Denmark
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We hope for more 2021 nominations.

The deadline is August 1, 2022.