

Summary of the DES Spring Meeting 2022

The spring meeting 2022 in the Danish Epidemiology Society was about epidemiological methods to study early life exposure and later health and disease. The meeting was held at Aarhus University on 3 May 2022.

The meeting had several presentations focusing on early life exposures including exposures during pregnancy, childhood and adolescence and later health. Speakers included professors Cecilia Ramlau-Hansen and Tina Kold Jensen, associate professor Mina Händel and postdocs Jessica Bengtsson and Line Hjort. Furthermore, three flash talks by Katja Biering Leth-Møller, Anne Gaml-Sørensen and Mette Jørgensen Langergaard were part of the program. All presentations were very clear showing impressive studies and careful analyses.

Several general topics came up in all talks including the impressive data sources available in Denmark on early life exposures and health outcomes including eg the Danish National Birth Cohort and Odense Child Cohort, but also the nationwide registers making it possible to follow persons for health care utilization and socioeconomic exposures during long time periods. Furthermore, all talks focused on how potential biases could have influenced the study results but also presented how careful epidemiological considerations can limit the influence of information bias, selection bias and confounding. Alternative designs including natural experiments and triangulation methods were approaches used to limit or evaluate the influence of confounding. Another element presented especially relevant in studies of early life exposures were mediation analyses to evaluate the mechanisms of how early exposures could influence later health.

Epidemiological studies with careful evaluation of potential biases and sensitivity analyses are essential which was clearly highlighted by the presentations at the spring meeting.