



Seminar

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The Knife and the Word: Placebo Effects in Surgery

Tuesday, 26 November, 2019, 2:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala
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S W E D I S H
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ABOUT KARIN JENSEN

Karin Jensen earned a degree in Clinical Psychology from Uppsala University in 2005. During her time in Uppsala, Jensen also received training in medical science. In 2009 she was awarded a PhD in clinical neuroscience from Karolinska Institutet with a thesis on pain and human brain function. Upon her graduation she joined the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital. Jensen has developed an independent research line within the field of placebo studies, first as Assistant Professor at Harvard Medical School, and later at Karolinska Institutet.

Today, Jensen is the leader of the Pain Neuroimaging Lab at Karolinska Institutet, a research group focusing on brain mechanisms involved in the experience of pain and placebo effects. Her work has challenged existing models of the placebo effect and contributed novel scientific data demonstrating that (a) placebos work outside of conscious awareness, (b) placebos work among patients with severe intellectual disabilities, and (c) placebo effects are shaped by subtle social cues between a patient and health-care provider. As a Pro Futura Scientia Fellow, Jensen will adopt an evolutionary perspective on the placebo effect and study placebos in previously understudied contexts such as psychotherapy, surgery and intellectual disability.

Jensen is engaged in international committees for placebo research and was a founding member of the Program in Placebo Studies at Harvard Medical School. She is currently a board member of the Society for Interdisciplinary Placebo Studies. Her scientific works are published in highly ranked scientific journals such as *Neurology*, *Pain*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)* and *Molecular Psychiatry*.

ABSTRACT

Over the last decade there has been increasing attention on placebo effects in surgical trials, as seen in influential journal publications and in the popular media. Still, little is known about surgeons' own attitudes and clinical behaviors regarding this topic. To address this lacuna, a national survey among Swedish surgeons was recently performed where real world medical behaviors and attitudes regarding placebo effects were assessed. Together with a brief history of the concept of placebo controlled trials in medicine, the novel data from the survey among Swedish surgeons will be discussed.