



**Karolinska
Institutet**

PRESS RELEASE, February 19, 2008

LifeGene – a national study of global importance

Karolinska Institutet has received from the Torsten and Ragnar Söderberg foundations and AFA Försäkring a total of up to 95 million Swedish crowns (15 MUSD) for LifeGene, a national study initiated by the Karolinska Institutet.

Infections, asthma, allergies, inflammatory diseases, mental diseases and musculoskeletal disorders are some of our most common medical problems. They are also the most costly for society, often develop early in life, and contribute considerably to the amount of leave taken from work or studies. There are also associations between these diseases and serious conditions that occur later in life, such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, stroke, cancer and dementia.

Paradoxically enough, our understanding of these diseases with a relatively early onset is extremely limited. We know that our predisposition for developing them is a product of our genes, environments and lifestyles, yet we do not know how these factors interact. The data we have are not enough for us to understand the underlying mechanisms, leaving us unable to develop effective prevention.

The LifeGene study, which was initiated by Karolinska Institutet, is a national collaborative project designed to build up a resource for research in all medical disciplines, enabling new and groundbreaking research on the relationships among heredity, environment and lifestyle. The study, which is unique in the world, will include studying half a million Swedes with the aim of creating new tools to prevent, diagnose and treat our most common diseases.

– Since LifeGene focuses on diseases that strike mid-life, we believe that this study will help not only to relieve human suffering, but also to reduce the amount of sick leave that they cause, says Torgny Wännström, president of AFA Försäkring. The fact that LifeGene is a national collaborative project has been important to us in our decision to make our donation. It is a study that will benefit all our interests.

– The Torsten and Ragnar Söderberg Foundations have a long-standing relation to Swedish medical research and Karolinska Institutet,” says Edvard Söderberg, director of the foundations. We therefore find it gratifying to make a donation, the largest in the history of our foundations, to a project that so clearly builds on the aggregated knowledge of medical science.

For further information about LifeGene:

ki.se/donations

www.lifegene.se



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About the donors:

AFA Försäkring (*donation to LifeGene: up to SEK 50 million, the donation is divided over five years after annual reporting*) administrates contract insurance, decided through collective agreements between labour market parties. The insurances provide support in the event of sickness, redundancy, death and occupational injury. Over three million people are covered by at least one of these insurances. AFA Försäkring also supports research and projects designed to improve the work environment. The company is owned by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and PTK. The local government sector has also commissioned AFA Försäkring to handle certain contract agreements.

See also: www.afaforsakring.se/

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The Torsten and Ragnar Söderberg foundations (*donation to LifeGene: SEK 45 million*) were formed in 1960. In 2007, the foundations donated SEK 202 million to scientific and other related purposes. Their aim is to promote scientific research and teaching of nationally valuable significance, focusing mainly on the economics, medical and legal fields. See also: www.soderbergs-stiftelse.se

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