

## Successful InterPregGen Collaborators Meeting in Oslo

**27 InterPregGen delegates from Europe and Central Asia met in Oslo in April to try to get closer to an answer to the mystery of pre-eclampsia in pregnant women.**

The InterPregGen ([www.interpreggen.org](http://www.interpreggen.org)) is a large EU-funded project, and countries in Europe, Central Asia and South America are taking part in the project.

The InterPregGen project seeks to identify the genetic factors which predispose to pre-eclampsia.

–Although researchers have studied pre-eclampsia for many years, still little is known about the causes of the disorder, says Linda Morgan, project leader and professor at the School of Life Sciences, University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom.

Pre-eclampsia is the most serious of the hypertensive disorders of pregnancy. It affects between two and five per cent of the pregnant women in Europe and North America, but researchers have found that the incidence can be as high as 18 per cent in some countries in Africa.

Due to effective monitoring of pregnant women in the developed world, few women now die of pre-eclampsia. In developing countries, however, pre-eclampsia accounts for more than 50,000 deaths of pregnant women and an estimated 900,000 deaths of babies annually.

Although we do not yet know the causes of pre-eclampsia, researchers know that the disorder runs in families. First degree relatives of affected women have a two- to three-fold increase in risk of developing pre-eclampsia.

The InterPregGen researchers, who are studying large population based cohorts, among them the Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study, hope to find genes that are linked to the disorder. This could mean a lot for the prevention and treatment of pre-eclampsia worldwide.

There is only one year of the project left now, so at the collaborators' meeting in Oslo each research group reported on their progress over the past year, and outlined their plans for the remaining time of the project.

–Many of the project milestones have been met, although there is still plenty to do before the project is finished, comments Linda Morgan.

The researchers shared some exciting results that are soon to be published in scientific journals.