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The Faroe Islands in biomedical research

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The health status in the Faroese is on a par with those of Nordic countries, e.g. measured by expected lifespan and perinatal mortality. The vast majority of our professionals graduate from Danish universities. The Faroese University was founded in 1965, which explains its relatively short academic tradition. However, the University does not include a faculty of social sciences. Today the Faroese Health System is the employer of more than 100 physicians and 40 dentists. Biomedical research in these islands has been modest, but has made considerable headway during the past 20 years. It is however humble compared to that of our neighbour, Iceland. The primary focus of our biomedical research has been the impact of marine pollution on children's development. Our research studies have been carried out in a positive and rewarding cooperation with several foreign researchers, but especially one researcher stands out, Professor Philippe Grandjean – he has been the prime mover for more than two decades. Due to the Faroe Islands' isolated position in the North Atlantic and its homogenous population, an increasing number of genetic research projects are being launched here. In 2006, a special law was passed to found a genetic resource centre under our Ministry of Health. In this context, a genealogic database will now be established to encompass the entire Faroese population, living as well as departed. Moreover, our government has decided to build a science park to be used by all interested researches, employed within the public sector as well as the private.