

**NOBAB-EACH conference in HUCS Hospital for Children and Adolescents, 12-14 of September in 2008.**

**Maja Söderbäck; Presentation o 11/ 9 in Session 2; 10.30 – 11.15**

### *Biography*

Maja Söderbäck has a PhD in Health Pedagogy. She is working as a Senior Lecturer at the School of Health, Care and Social Welfare at Mälardalen University in Sweden. She is a paediatric nurse as well.

Maja's research interest is in the area of the children's rights in health care settings. She has made research of families and children's involvement in the care both in Sweden and in Mozambique, where she was a guest lecturer during three years.

### *Abstract - Empowerment and empowering style*

In many of the European Health and Medical Services Act it is emphasised that a patients' knowledge should be respected and patients should participate and have influence over what happens to them. For the children in health and hospital care we have the Child convention and the NOBAB standard / EACH charter in order to safeguard children's needs.

There is an adult interest in children's safety in health care and during hospitalizations. Here, parents play an important and significant role in their child's recovery and healthy development. Likewise nurses find it important to inform and prepare children and to work in trustful relationships with parents.

A family centred care is promoted as the ideal way to structure the care of sick children and their families, and is seen as a key principle in children's health care provision globally. The involvement of parents in the delivery of care is seen as leading to positive outcomes both for the child and family. However, although parental participation has been promoted for several decades, been formalised in numerous government policy documents, and embraced by health professionals in hospital and community, it remains difficult to operationalise. There is discrepancy between what is espoused and what is actually practiced. Research demonstrate that parents, who want to stay with their hospitalised child (in varying ways) primarily because of concern for their child's welfare feel compelled to be there because of nurses' expectations. Nurses' control the nature of parents' participation and parents had to 'toe the line'. The dominant process appears to be the socialisation of parents to their role on the ward through exclusionary and exclusionary tactics. The results from research (from Sweden, UK & Ireland) indicate that the current models or theories on parent participation/ partnership are inappropriate or inadequate because they do not address empowerment characteristics.

In my presentation I will define the concept of empowerment and what it means in practice. Here I will illustrate how participation or mutuality is co-created by nurses who use an empowering style in encounters with parents. I will draw on data from a Swedish study.