



Fertility, Pregnancy, Birth and Breastfeeding - Women with Spinal Injuries

Erika Nilsson & Nora Sandholdt

**Roda's 10th Annual Milk Conference and reBIRTH
Zagreb 10th of November 2017**

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LAMA

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Today's presentation

- Who are we?
 - The project Mamma Pappa Lam
 - The Swedish context
 - Fertility, pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding with SCI
-

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Nora

- Car accident in 1991
- Incomplete Th 7-8
- Everything is possible attitude
- How am I supposed to be able to be a mother?



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Nora

- Horse riding accident - 94
- Tetraplegia C7
- Two sons 14, 17 yrs
- Project coordinator



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Background Mamma Pappa Lam



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The Swedish context

SWEDEN



DISABILITY
POLICY



HEALTH CARE
SYSTEM

GENDER EQUALITY

93% ACCESS
TO INTERNET

480 DAYS OF PAID
PARENTAL LEAVE



EQUAL
OPPORTUNITIES




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Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

ARTICLE 23 - Respect for home and the family



1. States Parties shall take effective and appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities in all matters relating to marriage, family, parenthood and relationships, on an equal basis with others, so as to ensure that:
 - The right of all persons with disabilities who are of marriage-able age to marry and to found a family on the basis of free and full consent of the intending spouses is recognized;
 - The rights of persons with disabilities to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to age-appropriate information, reproductive and family planning education are recognized, and the means necessary to enable them to exercise these rights are provided;
 - Persons with disabilities, including children, retain their fertility on an equal basis with others. 

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Goals of Mamma Pappa Lam

- Gather information about fertility, pregnancy, childbirth and parenting for people with spinal cord injuries.
- Disseminate information to people with spinal cord injuries and relevant healthcare personnel.
- Strengthen and inspire parents and/or parents-to-be with disabilities. We thereby also indirectly support their children.
- Facilitate encounters where people with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities can inspire each other and share their experiences.



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Method

- Website, parental network, social media, lectures family camps and get-togethers.
- Financed by the Swedish Inheritance Fund
- <http://sciparenting.com/>
- All material is checked by medical experts

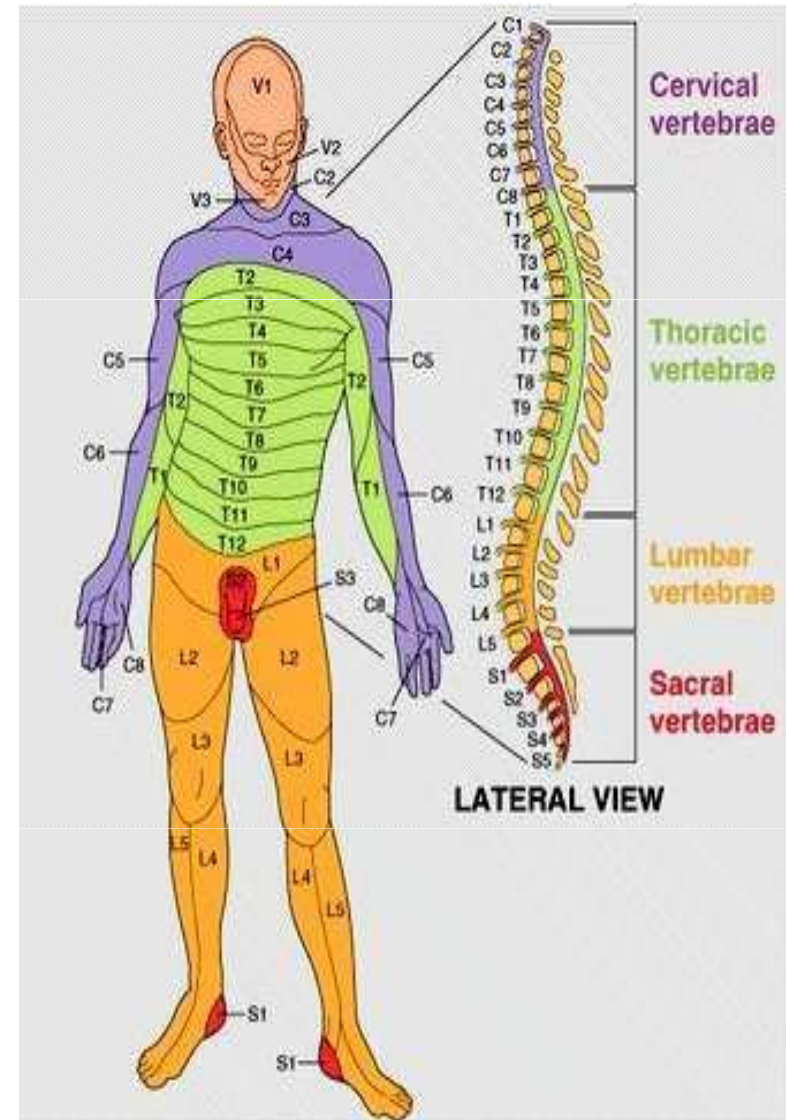


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Consequences of a Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)

- Paralysis
- No sensation
- Neurogenic bowel and bladder
- Spasticity
- Pain
- Sexual dysfunction
- Breath and lung capacity
- Autonomic dysreflexia



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Fertility and SCI

- Female fertility unaffected
- Male fertility affected, but today men living with SCI have good chances to become fathers with medical help.



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Male fertility

- Erection ability
- Ejaculation
- Decreased sperm count
- Reduced quantity of viable sperm
- Good treatment!



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Pre-conception

- Fertility unaffected in females
- Medication
- Concerns about what a SCI body can manage
- Independent parent?
- Pre-conceptual counselling



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Pregnancy

- Urinary tract infections
- Bowel management
- Low blood count
- Trombosis
- Autonomic dysreflexia



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Body changes

- Weight gain
- Decreased mobility
- Pressure sores
- Increased swelling
- Gastric problems
- Technical aids
- Breathing



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Childbirth

- Planning necessary
- Vaginal delivery or caesarean?
- How do I know it's time for labour?
- Premature delivery?
- Pain management
- Effects on lungs
- Labor position



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Post partum period

- Pressure sores
- Anemia
- Post-partum depression



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Breast feeding

- SCI above Th 6 can affect breastfeeding
- Positioning
- Autonomic Dysreflexia
- Aids to support breast feeding
- Encouragement important



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Take home message

- Women with all levels of injury can have children!
- Positive aspects outweigh the difficulties
- Beware of few red flags
- Ask questions, encourage and support!





Parenthood and Persons with Disabilities - Our Best Advice

Erika Nilsson & Nora Sandholdt

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The presentation

- Parenting with a disability
- Our best advice
- Networks and support groups
- Questions and discussion



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Practical challenges



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Taking care of an infant



Mayday Aid

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Sele Wriggle Wrapper, foto från
<http://philanteds.com>

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Changing diapers



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Technical aids



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A crib solution

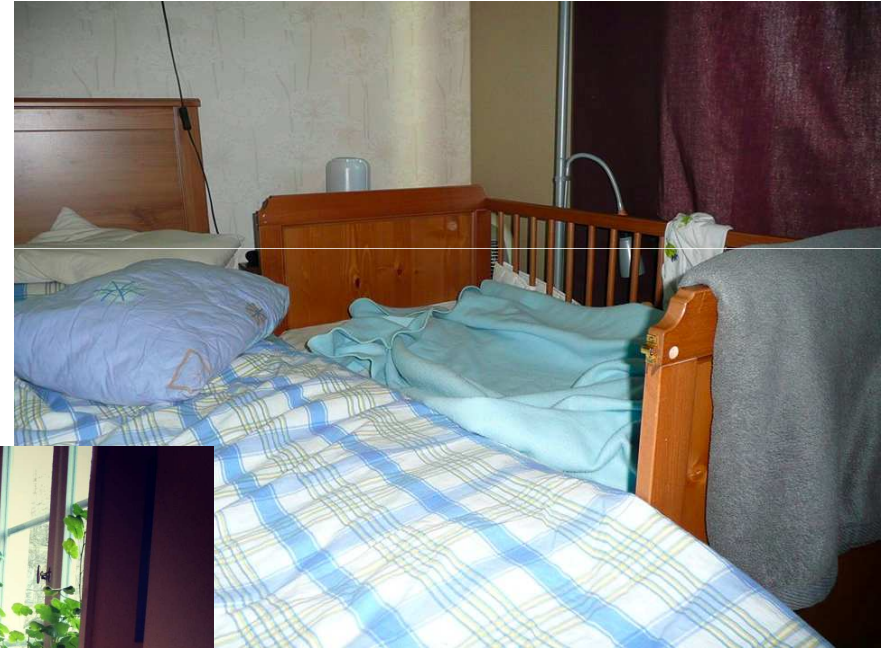


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More cribs



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High chairs

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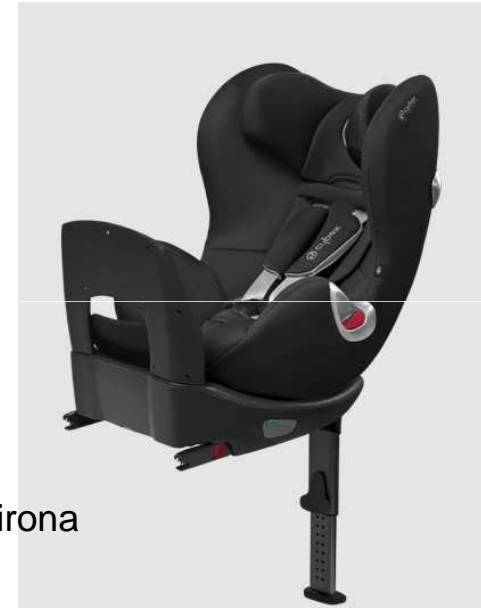
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Car seats



Britax Dual Fix



Cybex Cirone



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Adapted power chairs



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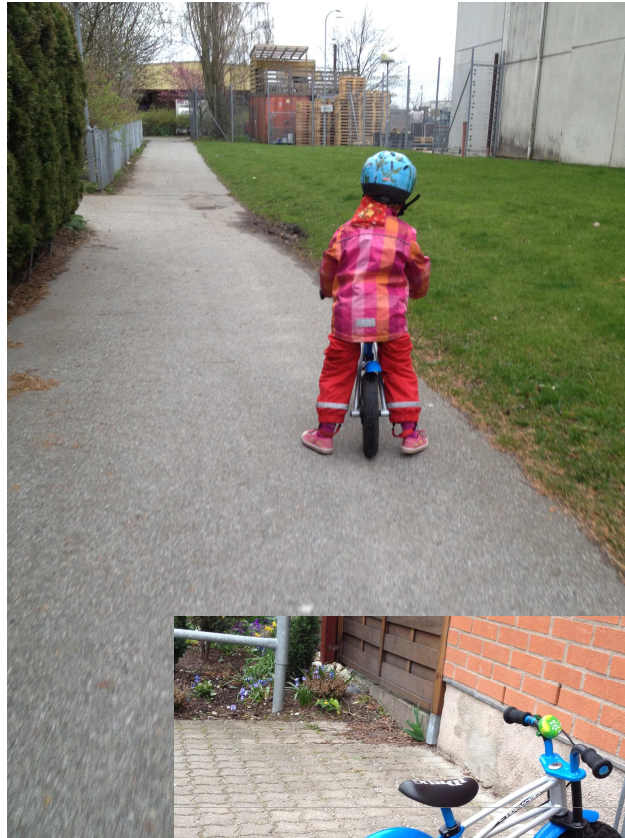
Energy and will of their own - a challenge



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Toddler years



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Networking



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Contacts:

- www.sciparenting.com
- www.mammapappalam.se
- www.facebook.com/mammapappalam
- Facebook group: Parents in wheelchairs
- info@spinalis.se

