

UiO **Faculty of Medicine**  
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# National naloxone policy in Norway

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# Norwegian Nasal Naloxone

- Recent history:  
Development &  
Implementation
- Obstacles &  
success factors



# Framework: Norwegian National Overdose Strategy 2014 – 2017



*Sure you can quit drugs -  
but first you have to survive!*

# National overdose prevention strategy

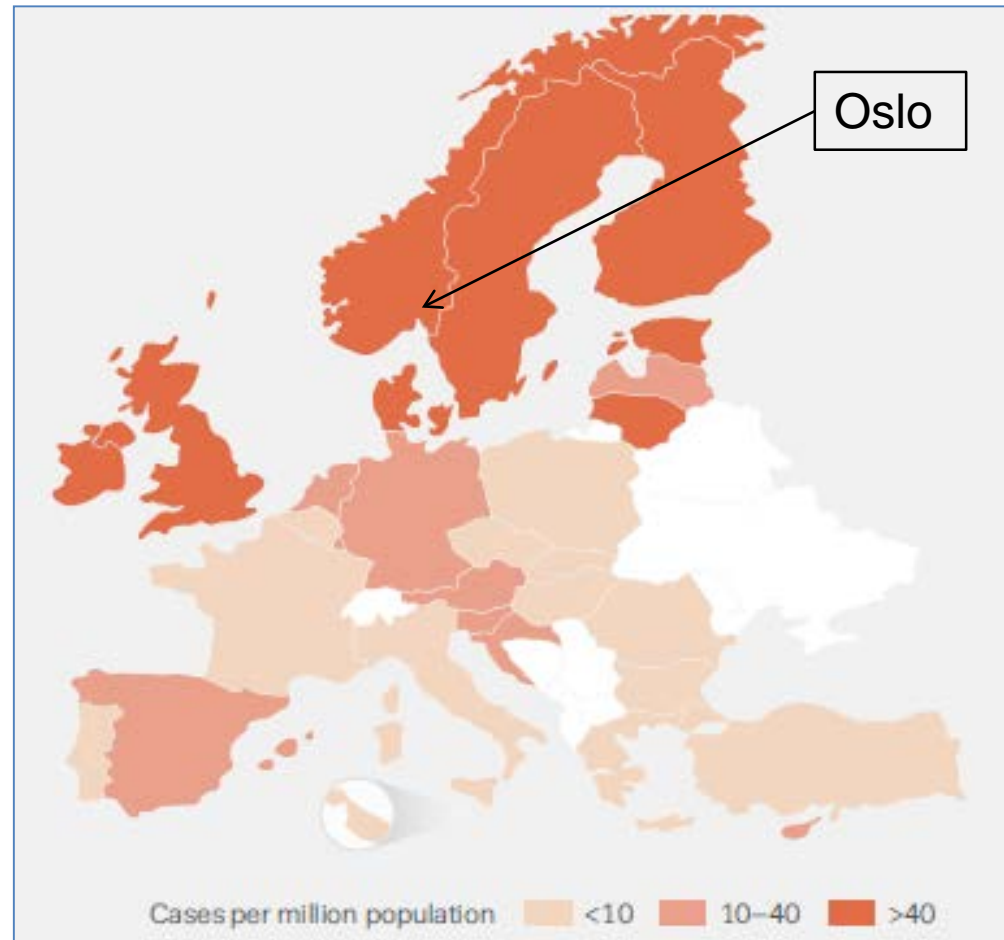
April 2014: the campaign was announced by the  
Minister of Health

Comprises 4-year strategy to reduce OD mortality

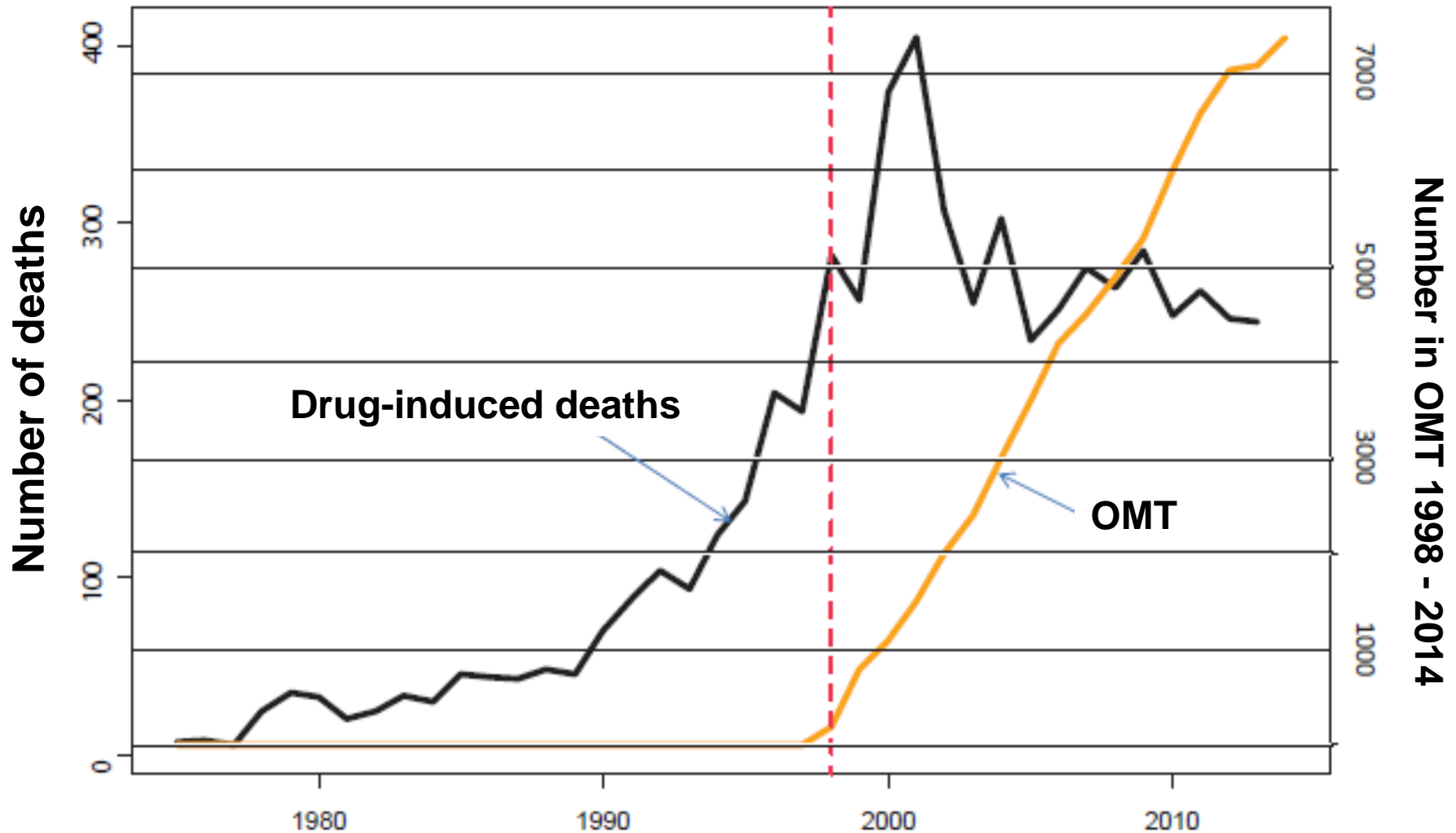
- Including multiple and coordinated sub-strategies as well as funding
  - Nasal naloxone distribution
  - SWITCH – from injection to inhalation
  - Local-authority project: Working alliance comprising 12 cities with high OD mortality

# Drug-induced deaths in Norway

- On average 260 persons died annually since 2002
- High case finding rate and good quality data
- Since 1977 > 5500 deaths
- OD deaths closely linked to injection of opioids, often combined with benzodiazepines



# Opioid maintenance treatment (OMT) as OD death prevention



# Coordinated efforts towards nasal naloxone

2009 / 10: Drug user advocacy group (**FHN**) requests politicians to take action.

- Parliamentary procedures lead to negative conclusion.

2013 / 14: Several meetings between SERAF and NoMA facilitated by the Directorate of Health

- The project is considered untraditional. Serious difficulties are gradually overcome

June 2014: Final approval is given. Nasal kits are delivered.

- Nasal naloxone distribution is launched by the Minister of Health. Training starts.

# Challenges to large scale rollout

- Absence of Evidence?
  - Lack of pharmacokinetic data
- No naloxone spray device readily available
- Liability
  - Prescription to third party
  - Responsibility in case of OD deaths handled by bystanders only?



# Interim spray

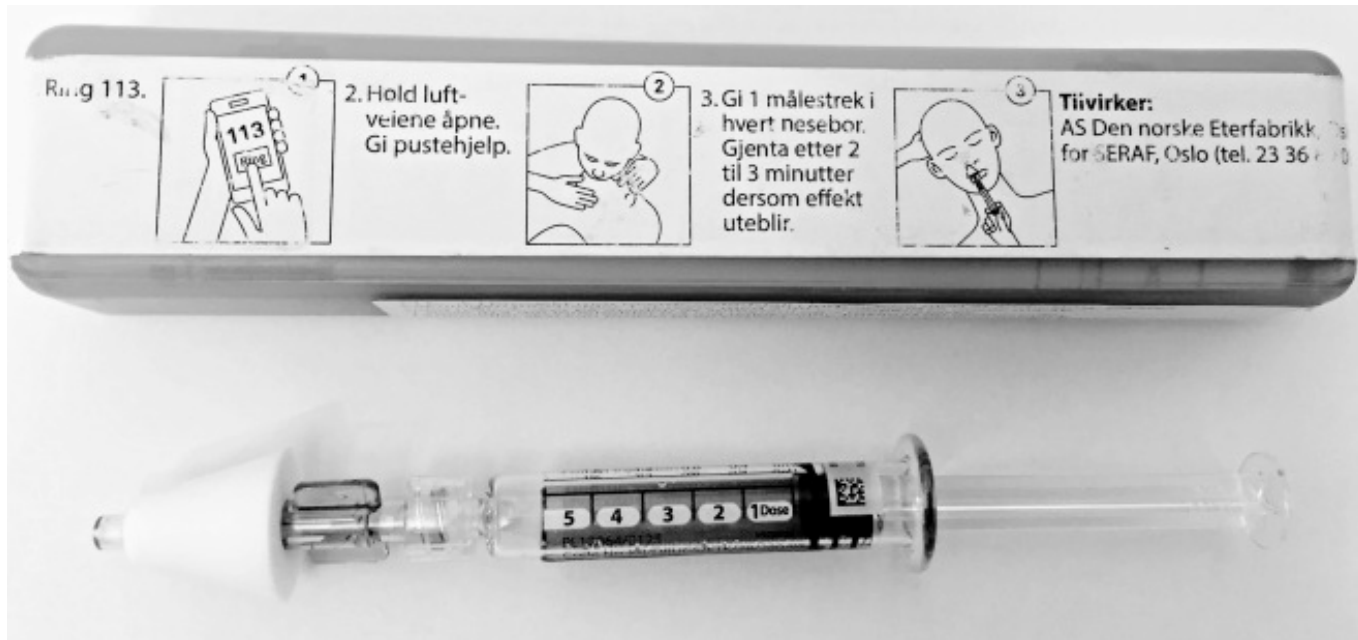


Figure 1

The Norwegian Medicines agency approved the assembly of the novel device by a local drug manufacturing company (Den Norske Eterfabrikken). The device is distributed by the Norwegian Centre for Addiction Research.

Madah-Amiri, Clausen & Lobmaier

*Rapid widespread distribution of intranasal naloxone for overdose prevention,*  
Drug and alcohol dependence 2017 [E-pub ahead of print]

# Rationale for Nasal Naloxone

- ✓ Two RCTs showing comparable effectiveness between nasal and i.m. route

Kelly et al. 2005, Kerr et al. 2009

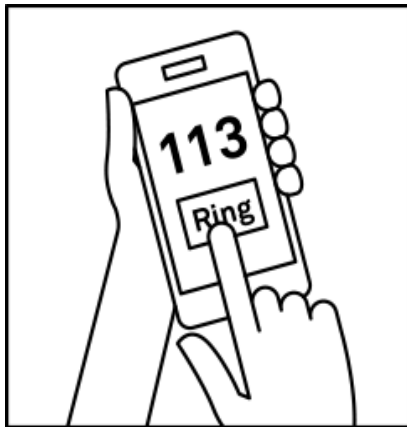
- ✓ Reductions in OD deaths with nasal spray in Massachusetts

Walley et al. 2013

- ✓ Planned cooperation with Sweden where needle-based naloxone was discouraged due to lack of support by the public opinion

# Overdose prevention training

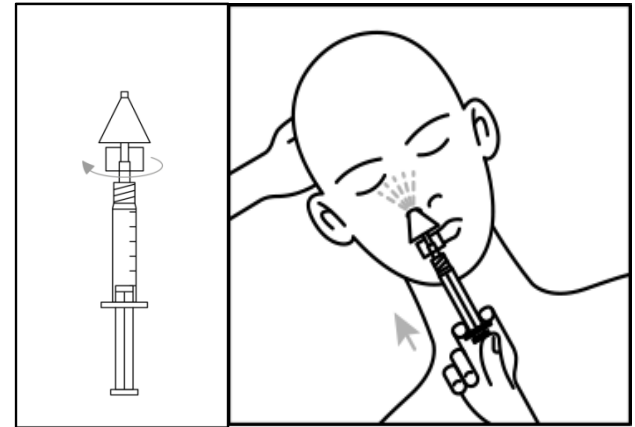
- ✓ Clients learn about overdose *risk factors, recognition and response*



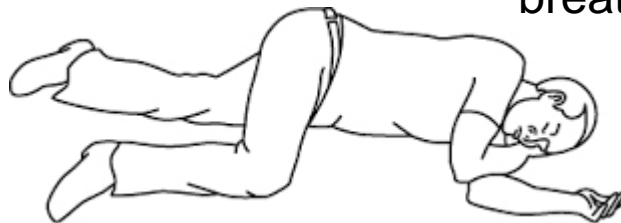
Ambulance



Rescue  
breathing

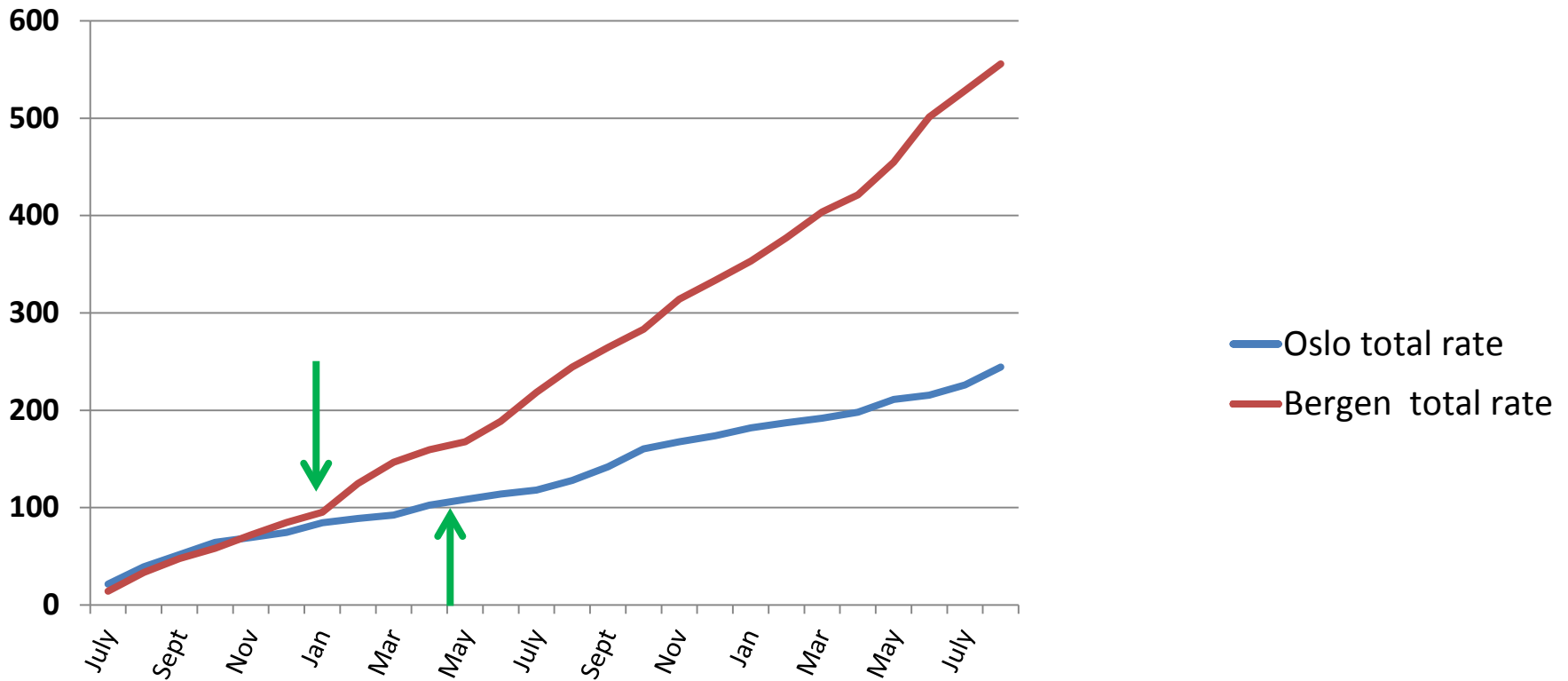


Naloxone



Recovery position & aftercare

# Spray distribution rate per 100 000 pop first 2 years



Between July 2014 and December 2015:

- 2056 sprays distributed
- 277 successful reversals reported

Madah-Amiri et al.,  
*Drug Alcohol  
Dependence 2017*

# Success factors



Working alliance between the university, changing governments and a dedicated industry partner

- ✓ Learning from others in the field & relying on existing local healthcare facilities
- ✓ Governmental support & incorporation in the national strategy
- ✓ Involvement of user advocacy groups (FHN)
- ✓ NoMA issued the waiver needed to distribute nasal spray without individual prescriptions

# Acknowledgements

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Thomas Clausen (professor, PI)

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## **Directorate of Health**

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## **Ambulance services**

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# NALOKSON

