

Opioid overdose prevention: The need for a range of strategies!

Thomas Clausen

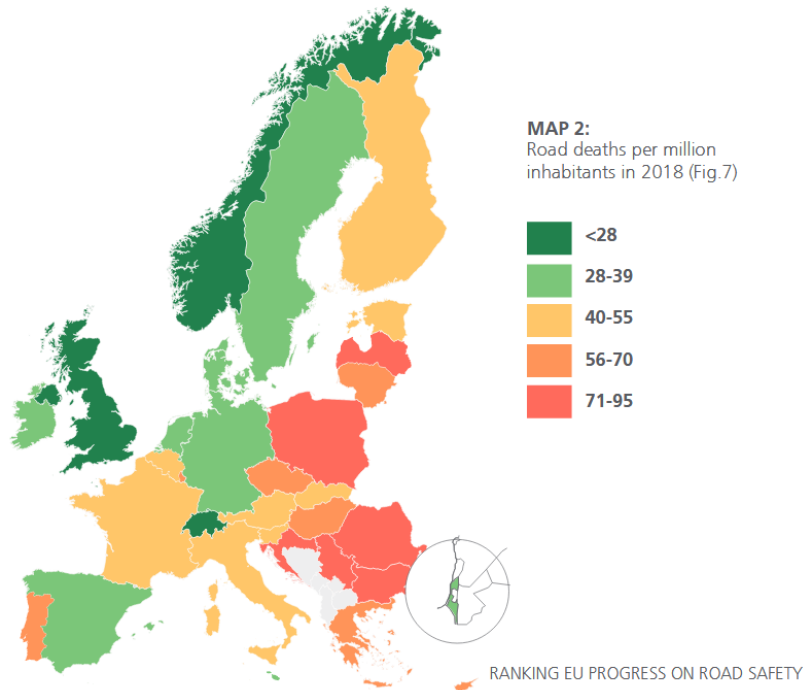
Head of Research centre and Professor (Dr. med)
thomas.clausen@medisin.uio.no

2019

Agenda

- ✓ **A complex problem**
- ✓ **A range of approaches**
 - ✓ Harm-reduction – Treatment – Public health policy
- ✓ **Long-term systematic responses**
 - ✓ Coordination – Funding – Generational perspective

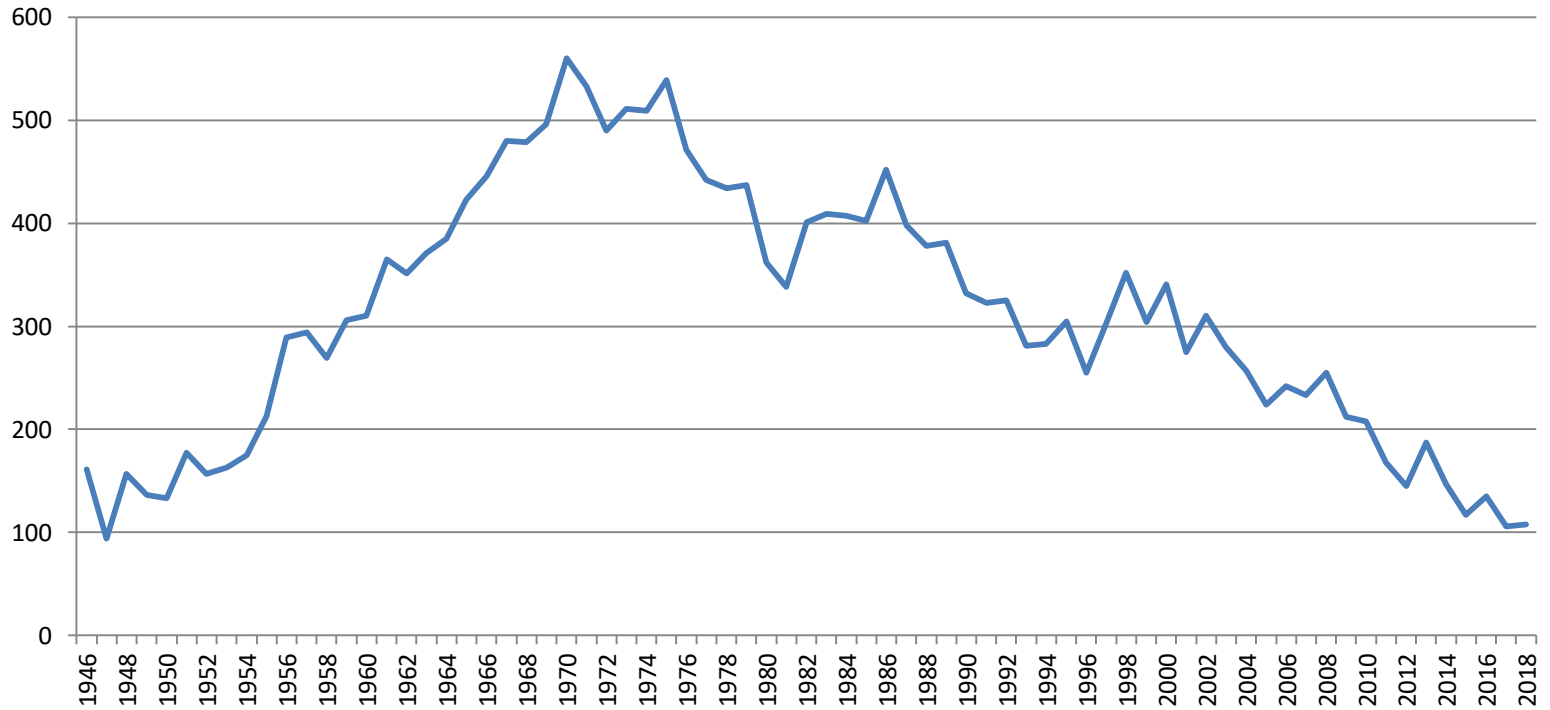
Road safety analogy



EU- 49 road deaths per mill

- Range 27-96
- 25.000 deaths in 2018 in Europe
- 1.3 mill deaths globally
- Interventions?

Numbers of road deaths; Norway



Opioid overdoses

➤ Respiratory inhibition

- ✓ Gradual onset
- ✓ Rapid onset



Risk factors

- ✓ Injection/Inhalation/oral
- ✓ High potency opioids
- ✓ Combinations
- ✓ Loss of tolerance
- ✓ Reduced general health
- ✓ Social deprivation
- ✓ **Not in treatment**

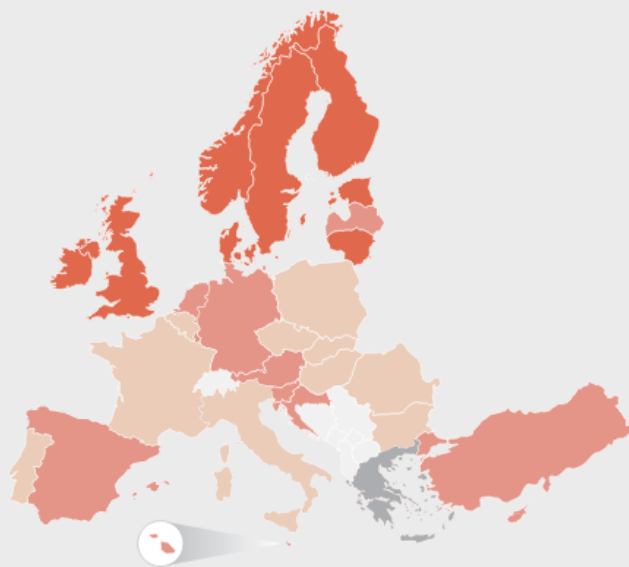
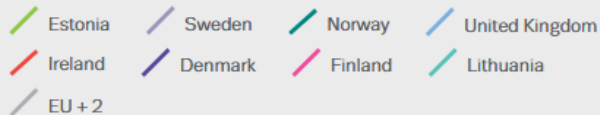
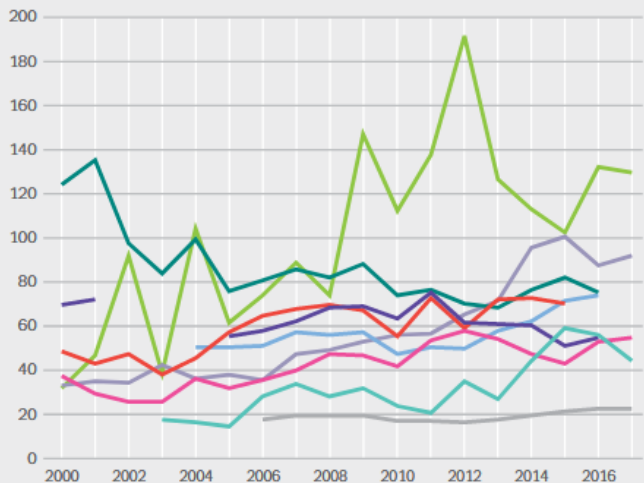
Opioid Overdose - “The straw that broke the camel’s back”



European trends 2016/17

Drug-induced mortality rates among adults (15-64): selected trends and most recent data

Cases per million population



Cases per million population

<10 10-40 >40 No data

- ✓ Heroin
- ✓ Injection
- ✓ Men
- ✓ 40 years
- ✓ No treatment

NB: Trends in the eight countries reporting the highest rates in 2017 or 2016 and overall European trend. EU + 2 refers to EU Member States, Turkey and Norway.

Overdose deaths

A heterogeneous group;
need for a range of interventions



Outside of treat.

Injecting

Combinations

OMT

Imprisoned

Taking alone

A range of approaches

Key approaches for reducing opioid-related deaths

Reducing fatal
outcome of overdose

**Supervised
drug
consumption**

Immediate first-aid
in drug emergencies

**Take-home
naloxone
programmes**

Improved bystander
response

Reducing risk of
overdose

**Retention
in opioid
substitution
treatment**

Reduce drug use
and injecting

**Overdose
risk
assessments**

In treatment
facilities and
prisons

**Overdose
awareness**

Knowledge of risk
and safer use

Reducing
vulnerability

**Outreach
and
low-threshold
services**

Accessible
services

**Enabling
environment**

Removing
barriers to service
provision

**Empowerment
of drug users**

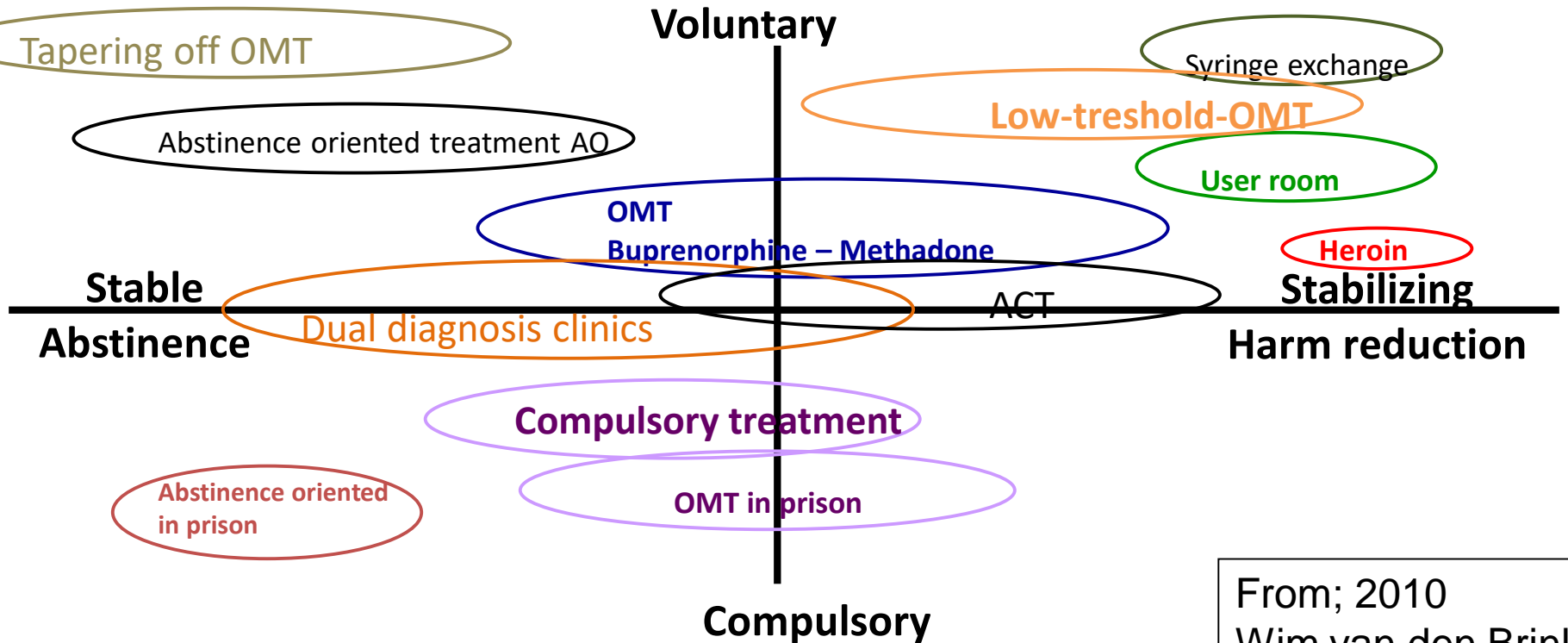
Enabling drug
users to protect
themselves

**Public health
approach**

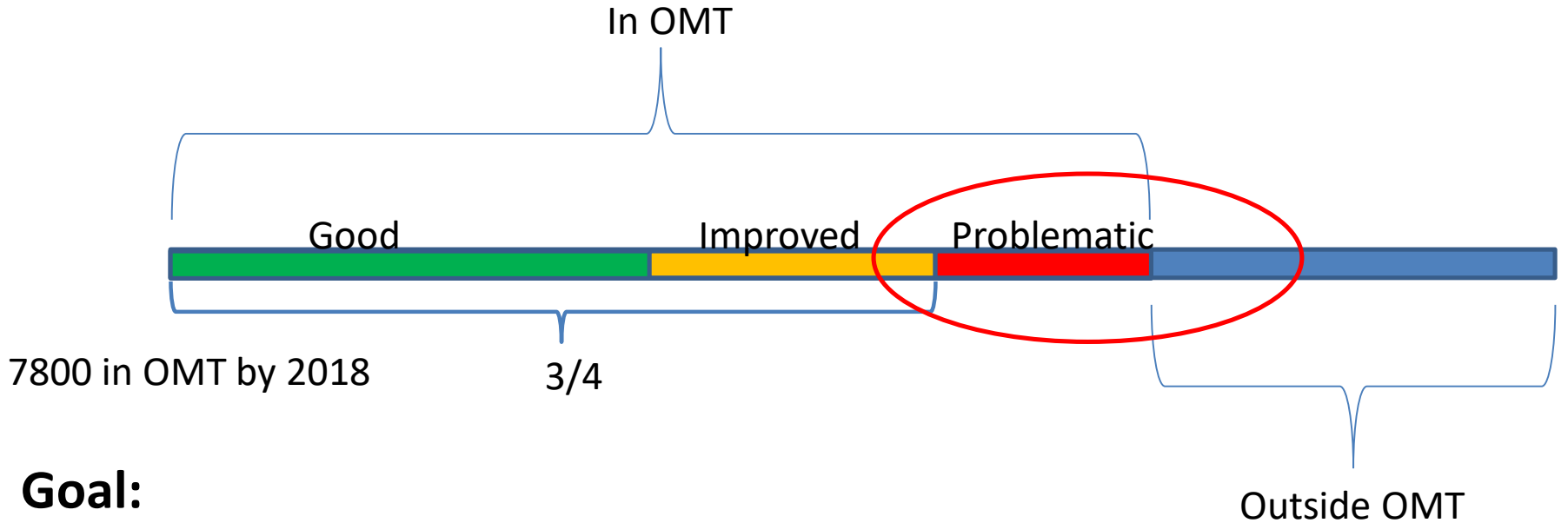
Recognition of
wider impact

Drug treatment (opioids)

A comprehensive model



Target group = 10.000+ (Norway)



Goal:

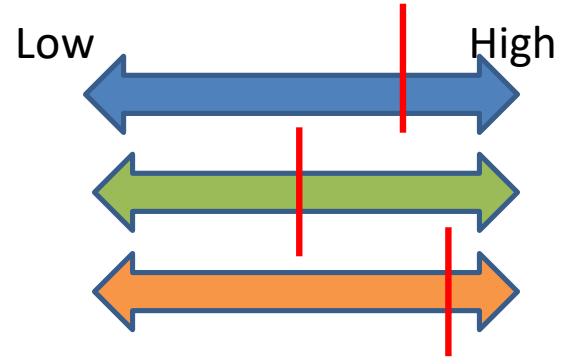
Provide treatment to higher numbers

Include new OMT medications

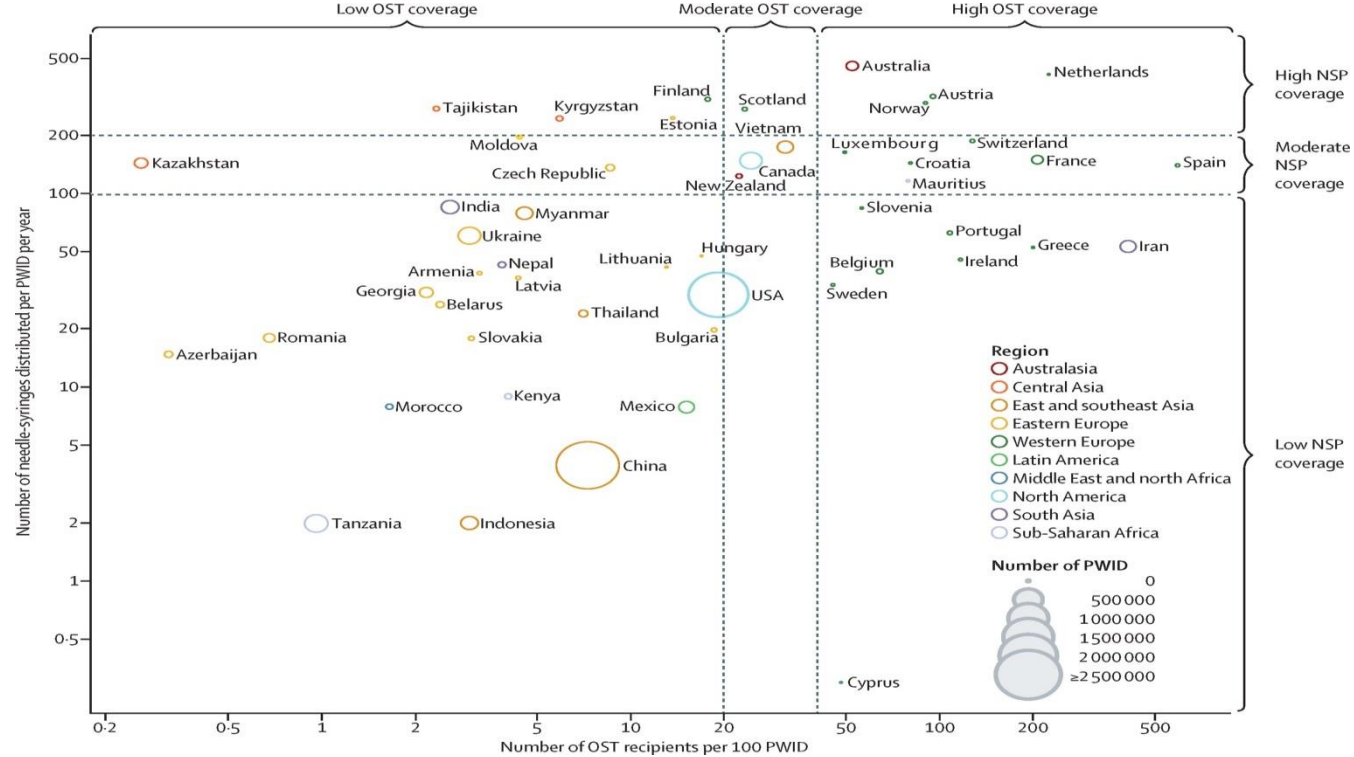
Provide harm-reduction measures

Dimensions of care

- Access to care
- Safety while in treatment
- Quality of care (Long-term)
 - User-involvement
- Quality of care includes adoption to users needs
 - **Tailored treatments to individual needs**



Combination of coverage of needle and syringe programmes and opioid substitution therapy for people who inject drugs

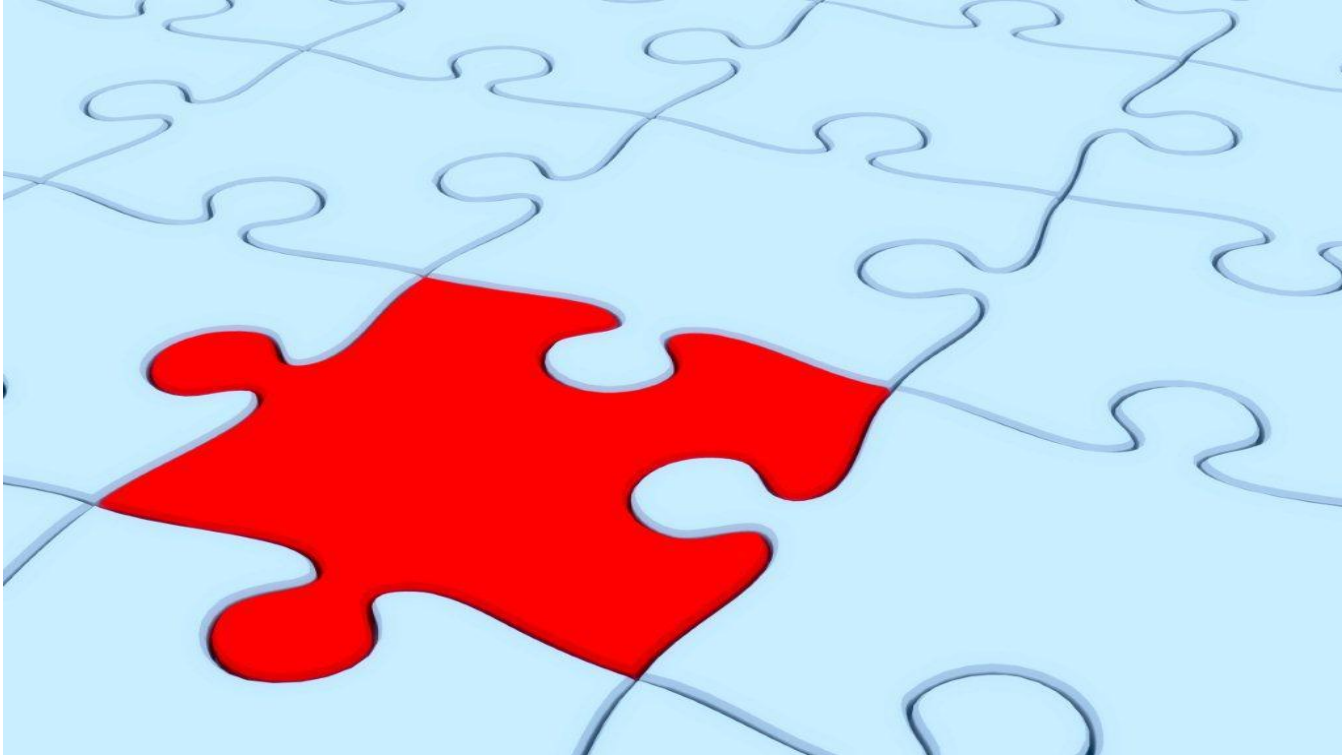


The Lancet Global Health
 Volume 5, Issue 12, Pages e1208-e1220 (2017)

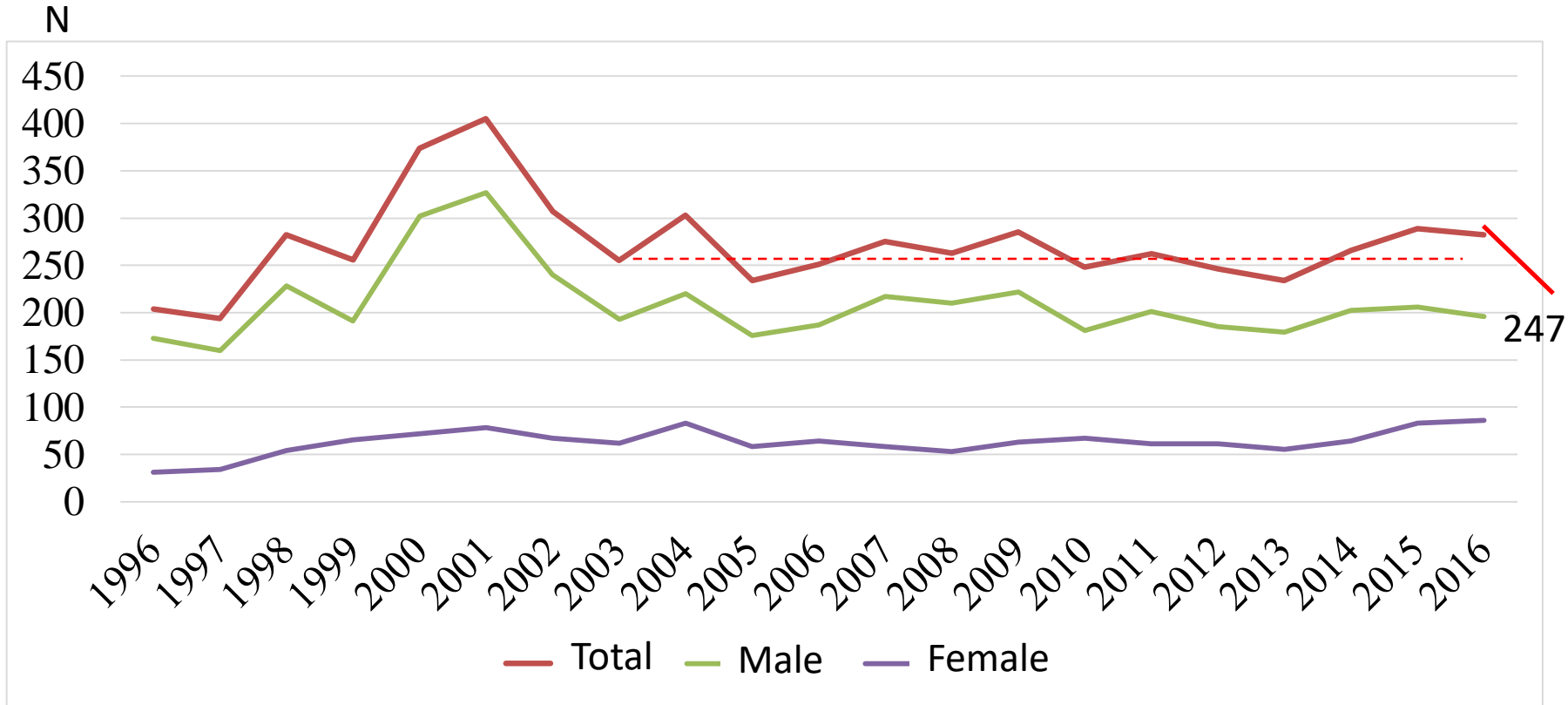
DOI: 10.1016/S2214-109X(17)30272-X



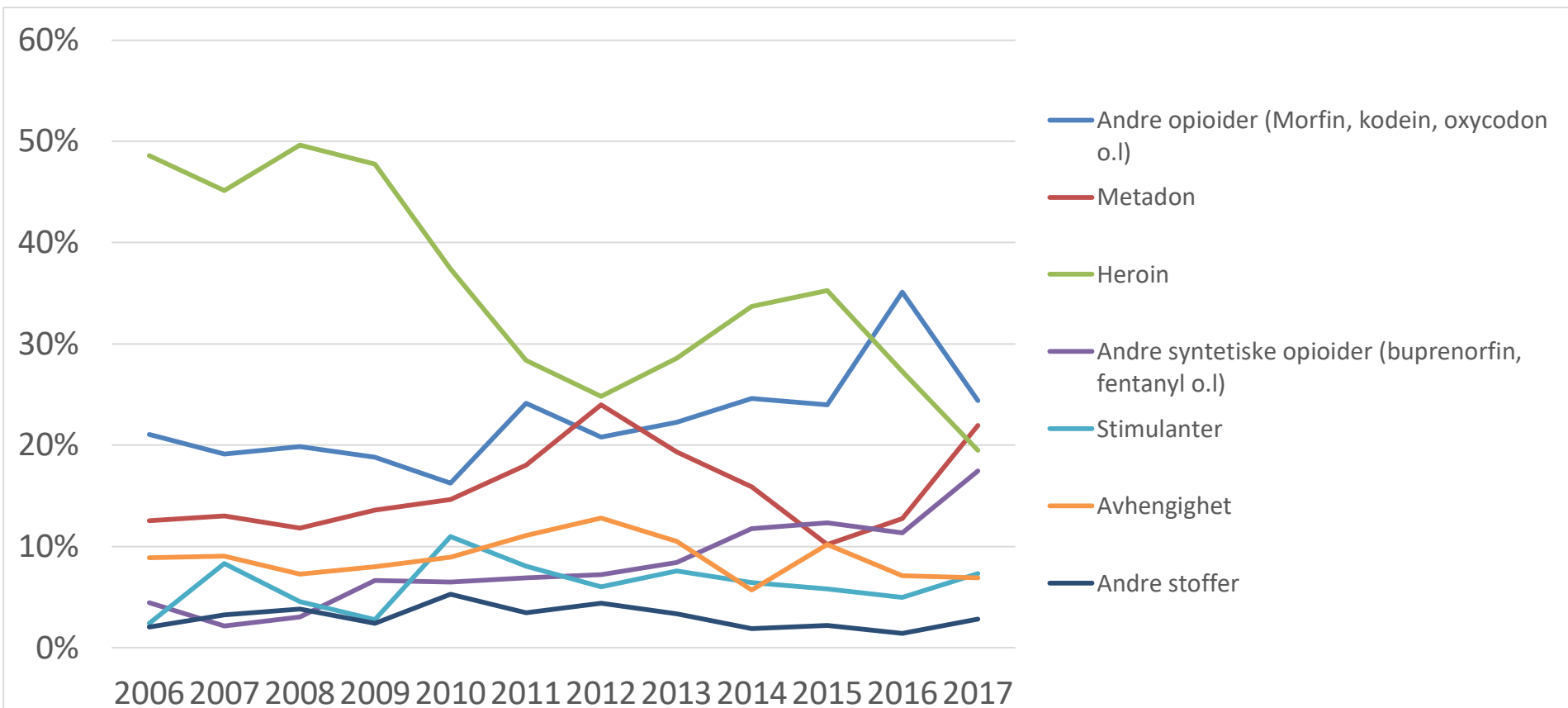
Local situation?
Need for local research!



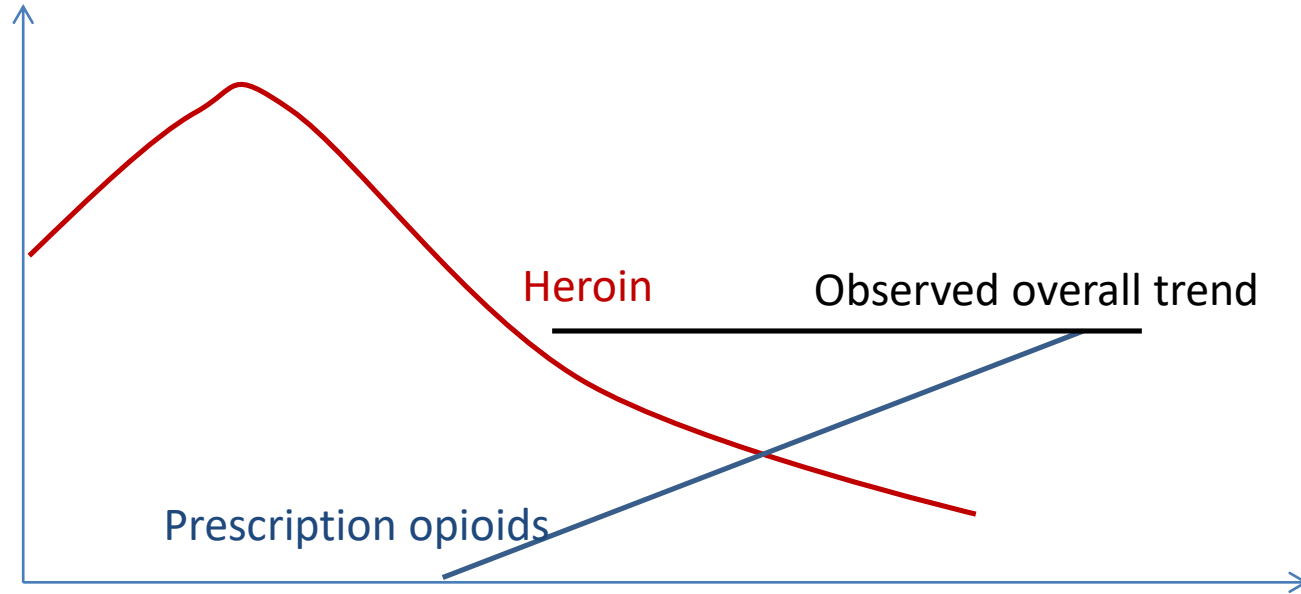
Overdose deaths, Norway



Norway; Deaths by substance



Two opioid waves?

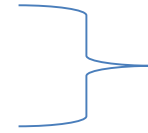


Recommendations

- ✓ Ongoing local evaluation and research
 - ✓ Know your current situation and adopt to moving target
- ✓ Long-term coherent public health policy
- ✓ Provision of range of treatments
- ✓ Adequate and stable funding for interventions
- ✓ Provision of range of harm-reduction interventions
- ✓ User involvement

National overdose prevention strategy

- ✓ Aims at reducing numbers of deaths annually
 - Long-term 0-vision



Inspired by road safety work

- Multidimensional strategy:
 - **Improve access to evidence based treatment (OMT)**
 - **Take-home Naloxone distribution**
 - Encourage “SWITCH” from injection to inhalation
 - Improve knowledge and practices in municipalities
 - Included funding (also for evaluation/research)
 - Training of prescribers

<https://helsedirektoratet.no/folkehelse/psykisk-helse-og-rus/overdose>

<https://helsedirektoratet.no/publikasjoner/nasjonal-overdosestrategi-20142017>

No simple solution



“For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong.”

-H.L. Mencken