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Drug-free treatment in Norway Why and how?

Open day.

22nd International Meeting on the Treatment of Psychosis

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Drug-free treatment

A possibility for persons with serious mental problems to choose treatment that does not include neuroleptics.



Drug-free treatment

- Norwegian context.
- Why?
- How?
- What have we achieved?



Norwegian Health Care

- A public system
- Primary health care
 - Local/town responsibility
- Specialized health care
 - State responsibility

Organized in four Regional Health Trusts

University Hospital of North Norway

University and regional hospital
for Nordland, Troms, Finnmark
and Svalbard
(480 000 people)



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Drug-Free Treatment

“The Patients Healthcare System”



The Golden Rule

The law of reciprocity in many religions

The principle of treating others as one would wish to be treated



The Golden Rule

“Treatment programs in Mental Health
and Substance Abuse
shall have a higher yearly growth
than programs in somatic medicine”.



2010: National Strategy for Reduced Coercion in Mental Health

- Systematic introduction of alternatives to coercion
 - Drug-free treatment options
 - User-controlled beds
 - Outreach teams
 - Individual plans
 - Crisis plan



2010:

National initiative for drug-free treatment.

User organisations:

- **Mental Helse,**
- **Hvite Ørn,**
- **Landsforeningen for Pårørende innen Psykisk helse,**
- **Aurora**
- **We Shall Overcome – WSO**



«Regulatory document»

(Norwegian Health Ministry)

- Patients in need of psychiatric help shall, «within defensible limits», have the choice of different treatment options, amongst these, treatment options that do not include the use of medication. These options shall be developed in close collaboration with the consumer organizations.



November 2015:

- Each Regional Health Trust shall establish alternatives to medication, including help to tapering and termination of the use of medication and help to establish other therapeutic treatment measures. (Norwegian Health Ministry)



November 2015:

- For patients that are admitted to psychiatric treatment facilities and that are being treated with medication, there should be made plans for tapering/termination of the treatment with drugs. (Norwegian Health Ministry)



November 2015:

To obtain experience with medication free treatment of patients with serious mental problems, each Regional Health Trust must establish at least one bed unit reserved for this purpose. (Norwegian Health Ministry)



Regional Plan

The Health Ministry demands that the regional health trusts together with representatives from the user organizations ensure a proposal for a unified solution that is written down in a protocol and signed by both parties, that is the Health Trust and the affected user organizations. (Norwegian Health Ministry)



- Regional plan/protocol developed in close cooperation with the user organizations.
- Local plan on the basis of the regional plan/protocol in close cooperation with local user organizations.



Drug free treatment

- Patients in this program shall not be subjects to coercion or pressure to use any kind of medication
- The most important aspect of the treatment is to provide a safe environment , a bed to sleep in, someone to talk with and regular meals for every patient.



- One shall emphasize on the development of a “good treatment culture for drug-free treatment” that can contribute to the development of new needed knowledge.
- Drugs shall not be an important part of the treatment that is offered, but shall not be refused to patients that want drugs.



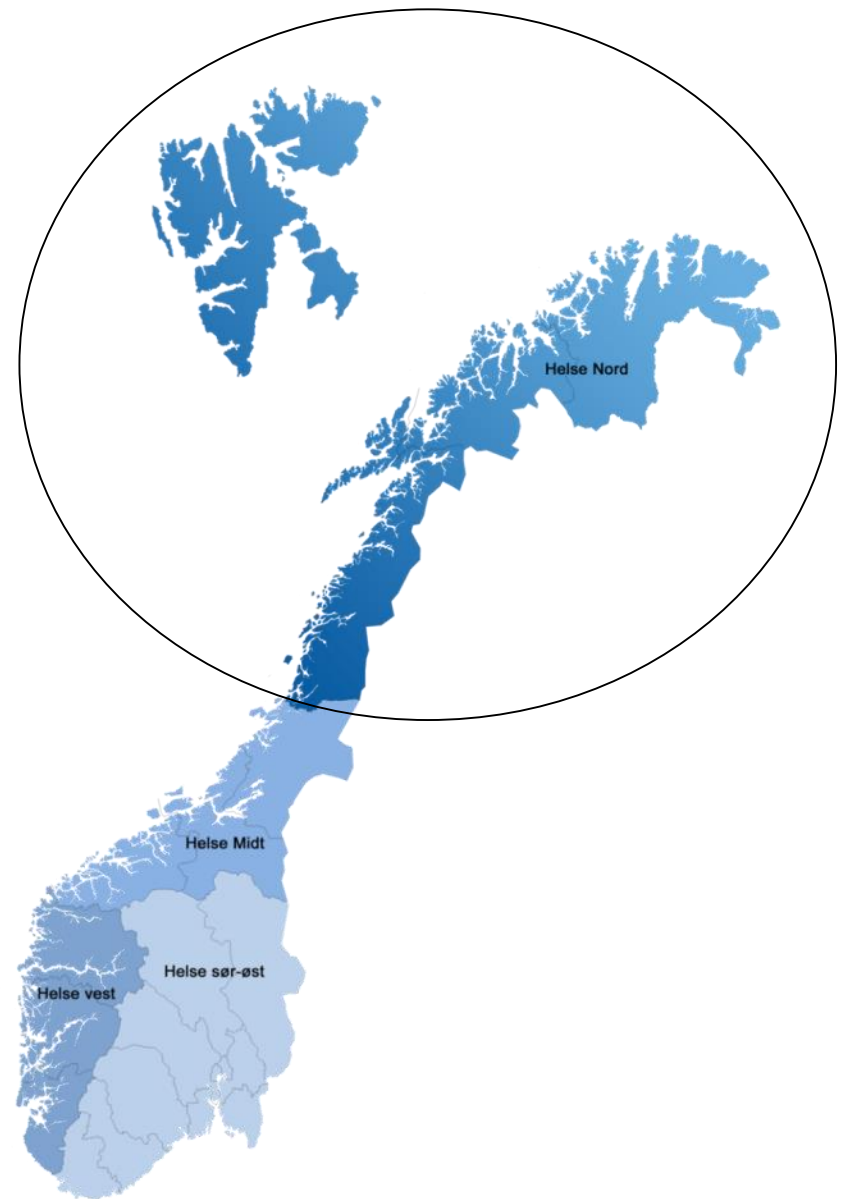
Give priority
to the development
of a bed unit
with 6 beds

University Hospital of North Norway

Local hospital for Troms and
northern Nordland
(187 000 people)

Psychiatric hospital
responsibility also for Finnmark
(265 000 people)

University and regional hospital
for Nordland, Troms, Finnmark
and Svalbard
(480 000 people)





Drug-free treatment- Regional Protocol - 1

- Secure choice/options for patients
- Is a part of a major effort to reduce the use of psychotropic drugs
- Is based on patients choice
- Should focus on cooperation with local treatment programs
- Should include a recovery perspective



Drug-free treatment- Regional protocol - 2

- Should be network oriented
- Should engage families of patients
- Focus on activity/job/school/network
- Help patients to be independent
- Employ people with own experiences
- Patients and employees must together develop a program that they believe in.



Criteria for admitting patients

- No coercion
- Only motivated patients
- Priority to patients with psychosis or bipolar “disorders”
- Referrals only from other specialized services
- No acute admissions
- No patients with major problems with substance abuse
- Only “safe” therapeutic procedures
- Tapering of psychotropic drugs prior to admission



There is no national
or international
experience
with establishing a drug-free
bed unit
within the framework
of
a psychiatric clinic/hospital.



Experiences?

- Soteria?
- Earth House?
- New offers in other health regions in Norway?



Why drug-free offers?

- User knowledge
- Professional knowledge
- Evidence based knowledge



The Knowledge Centre for the Health services in Norway



Drug-free treatment on the agenda.



Myths about psychotropic drugs

- The introduction of neuroleptics revolutionized psychiatry?
- Corrects chemical imbalance in the brain?
- Stops the development of disease?
- Prevents relapse?
- Improve/better prognosis ?



Psychiatric Diagnosis



Journal for the Norwegian Medical Association # 6, 2017:

- Drug-free hospital wards – a measure without any knowledgebase.

Jan Ivar Røssberg, Ole A Andreassen, Stein Opjordsmoen Ilner

- Health secretary Høie has let himself be manipulated by interest groups and not been willing to listen to professionals.

Tor Ketil Larsen



The treatment program of the Drug-Free Treatment Unit



Research???

(Psychologist Elisabeth Klæbo Reitan)

- What are the characteristics of patients who receive offers of drug-free treatment?
- How is the progress of patients who receive drug-free treatment?
- How do patients consider a drug-free treatment program?



There is a crack in everything.
That's how the light gets in.

“Anthem”

Leonard Cohen (1934 – 2016)