

The role of the safe injection facility in Oslo and the opening hours on patterns of ambulance call-outs for overdose



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The Norwegian safe injection facility (SIF)

- Regulated by specific “injection room” bill (by parliament 2004)
- Safe injection facility opened in Oslo in 2005 (and in Bergen in 2016)
- Only for injection of heroin
 - No other drugs, no inhalation

Aims:

To provide a safe and hygienic facility to inject heroin and to reduce OD risk

To provide harm reduction, and to be a gate-way to the treatment system

The Oslo safe injection facility

- Co-located with low-threshold facility and 2 min away from “central” ambulance station
- Always 3 staff of which at least one is nurse during opening hours
- Staff do not administer naloxone to OD victims at the facility
- In case of OD at SIF the staff call the ambulance and give first aid; rescue breathing by bag etc.
- Upon ambulance arrival the ambulance staff give naloxone by injection; normally i.m. and other required first aid



Activity and overdoses at the SIF 2015-2016

- Oslo a city of 600.000 inhabitants
 - SIF had 35.000 injections and 333 overdoses in 2015
 - SIF had 33.000 injections and 295 overdoses in 2016
 - Around 900 individual users per year
 - A total of 627 overdoses and an overdose rate of 0,94% (2015) and 0,88% (2016) per injection
 - Overall ~ 0,9% overdose risk per injection at SIF in Oslo
 - Among 18-29 group; OD risk ~ 2.0% overdose risk per injection
- No fatal events since opening in 2005

“Reasons” for OD given by victims

- 462 (74%) Polydrug (mostly benzo and alcohol) typically taken before SIF
- 351 (56%) Reduced tolerance (following prison release and treatment)
- 219 (35%) Reduced/poor somatic health
- 219 (35%) Very potent heroin taken
- 147 (23%) Taken “high dose”

- Multiple responses possible
- <https://www.mynewsdesk.com/no/velferdsetaten/news/ny-rapport-ute-overdoser-paa-sproeyterommet-i-oslo-2015-2016-259559>

Study population

- All ambulance call-outs during 2014-2015 reviewed from “central ambulance station”; (1 of 5 stations in Oslo; 80% of naloxone use)
- 48,825 ambulance calls
- 1054 were for opioid overdoses (responded to naloxone injection)
- The rate of calls for overdoses was 1 out of 48 of the total ambulance calls in central Oslo
 - ✓ 465 individuals during 2014 and 2015
 - ✓ Standard 0.4mg naloxone i.m., thereafter titration to response

Oslo Safe Injection Facility

- ✓ Overdoses are “common” at the SIF in Oslo and make up nearly half of the city’s ambulance-attended overdoses during their opening hours
- ✓ Clinical symptoms of SIF patients were more severe
 - likely due to the SIF staffs’ ability to monitor longer before calling
- ✓ Further, the high percentage of SIF patients who received pre-hospital discharge indicate that the SIF functions as a place to receive follow-up care
- **SIF has a role both for monitoring of potential overdoses, as well as observing the victims after receiving ambulance care**

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