

# Slight increase in Norwegian drug consumption in 2015

April 20 2016

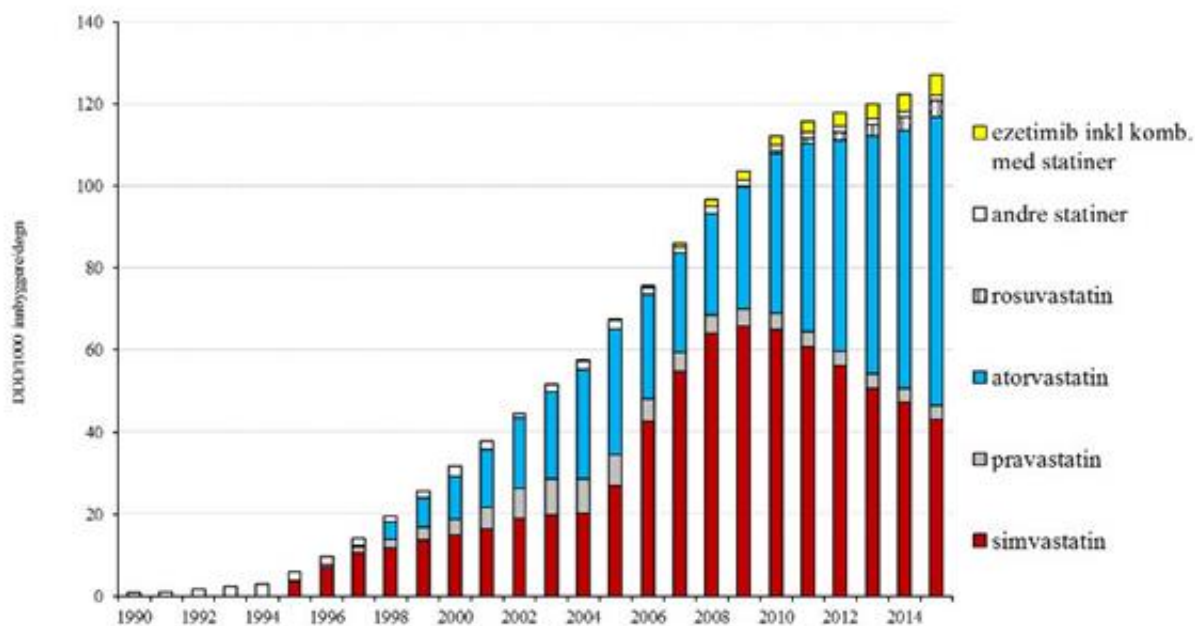


Figure 1 Sales of cholesterol-lowering drugs (ATC group C10) in Norway during the period 1990-2015, expressed in DDD / 1000 inhabitants / day. White = other statins.

Drug sales measured in defined daily doses (DDD) increased by 2 per cent from 2014 to 2015. Revenue growth was 8.6 per cent. This is shown in "Drug Consumption in Norway 2011-2015", a report issued by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health.

The report provides a detailed overview of all sales of prescription and over-the-counter medicines from wholesalers to pharmacies, hospitals / nursing homes and grocery stores each year in the period from 2011 to 2015.

## **Total sales of medicines in 2015**

- Wholesalers sold medicines for 16.1 billion Norwegian kroner in 2015, of which sales of veterinary drugs accounted for just over 1 billion kroner. Converted to recommended retail prices in pharmacies and grocery, this gives a turnover of around 24 billion.
- Revenue increased by 8.6 per cent from 2014 to 2015.
- Measured in terms of DDD, drug sales increased by 2.1 per cent.

Revenue growth was mainly due to increased use of newer and more expensive medicines to treat cancer, multiple sclerosis and other immunological diseases, and hepatitis C infections.

Population growth and an ageing population have contributed to the slight increase in sales measured by volume over time.

## **Cardiovascular group is biggest**

Mortality from cardiovascular diseases has declined sharply over time. Many factors have contributed to this, including better pharmacological treatment. Good control of [high blood pressure](#) and high cholesterol help to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

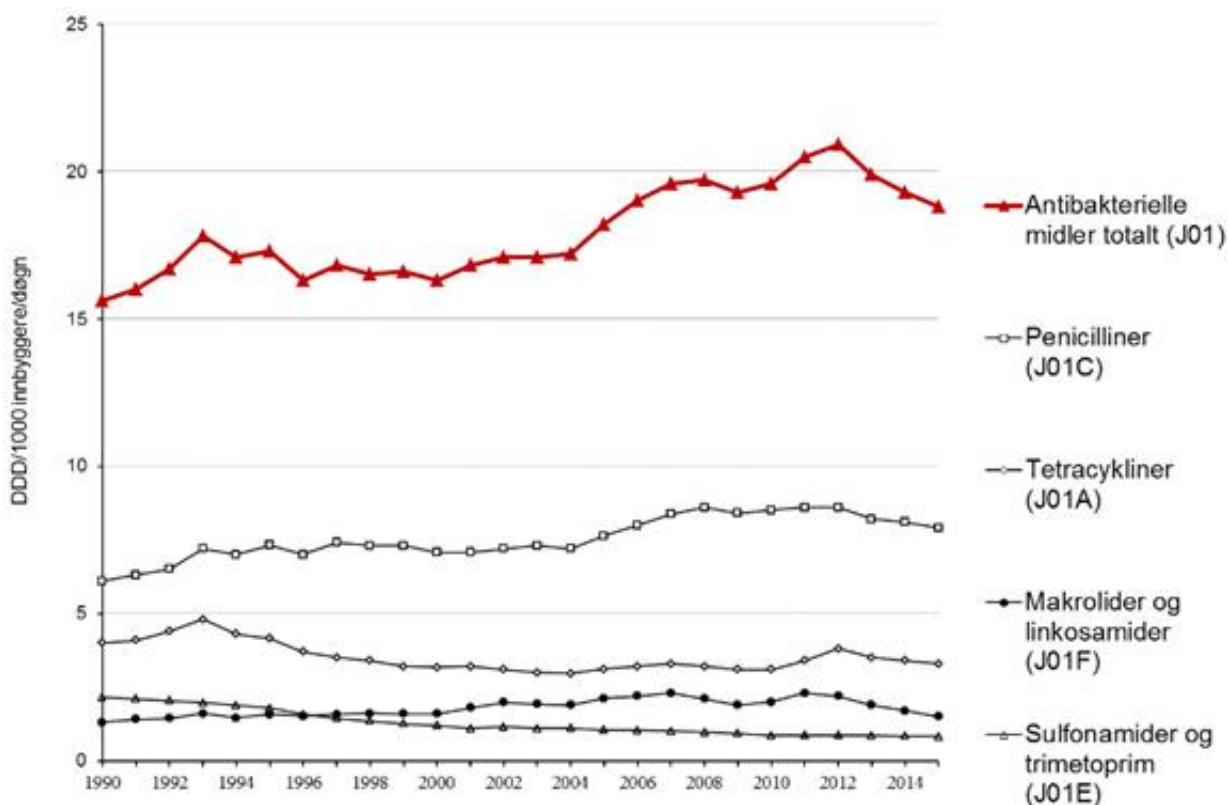


Figure 2. Sales of antibiotics (ATC group J01) in Norway during the period 1990-2015 by DDD / 1000 inhabitants / day. Source: Wholesale Drug Statistics, Norwegian Institute of Public Health

Drugs used to treat and prevent cardiovascular diseases (ATC group C), is the largest pharmaceutical group measured in doses. It accounted for about 30 per cent of the total number of doses in 2015. Measured in doses, sales increased in this group by 1.6 per cent.

Sales of cholesterol-lowering medicines measured in DDD increased by 5 per cent from 2014 to 2015, which was a slightly greater increase than the previous year. Figure 1 shows the trend in the use of cholesterol-lowering medicines since 1990.

## Sales of antibiotics decreased in 2015

The National Strategy against Antibiotic Resistance 2015-2020 contains goals to limit the use of antibiotics. Sales of antibiotics in 2015 measured in doses still show a slight decline (Figure 2). This is in line with the goals of the action plan.

## Stable sales of over-the-counter drugs

In 2015, sales of over-the-counter drugs accounted for 13 per cent of the total [sales](#) in number of DDDs and 11 per cent of the total costs. These proportions have remained constant over time.

The report can be downloaded as a pdf file from [fhi.no](http://fhi.no). The report contains several figures showing changes in the use of key drug groups over the last 25 years, such as pain relief and psychotropic drugs.

## About defined daily dose (DDD)

Defined daily dose (DDD) is a unit of measurement used to study changes in [drug consumption](#) over time and compares geographical differences both nationally and internationally. For example, the sale expressed as 10 DDD / 1000 inhabitants / day means that ten out of 1000 people (i.e. one per cent of the population) can receive this specific treatment daily.

Since the doses used and the treatment duration may vary from person to person, the proportion of users often does correspond to the estimated "DDD figure." The Norwegian Prescription Database provides information about the number of people and proportion of the population that have received a prescription and had the medicine dispensed in a pharmacy. Data for 2004-2015 are available at

[www.reseptregisteret.no](http://www.reseptregisteret.no).

Provided by Norwegian Institute of Public Health

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