



## CLINICAL PHARMACY IN NORWAY: MOVING FORWARD!

**Malin Davidsson, MScPharm**

**Mette Maja Bredal Teigen, MScPharm, MScClinPharm**



**I**n Norway, the area of clinical pharmacy is moving in the right direction. A government document on the rational use of medicines was recently issued, and now hospital pharmacies are focusing on how to transform the visions into practice. Already the number of pharmacists working closer with hospital wards is increasing.

### Multi-centre study and definition of Drug-Related Problems

Most clinical pharmacists in Norway carry out patient-related interventions by reviewing patient charts. In 2004 a major multi-centre study documented the number of Drug-Related Problems (DRP) identified and intervened upon by clinical pharmacists. Results have been published in various international journals, which should be of great value for the further development of clinical pharmacy in Norway [1, 2, 3, 4].

Because most pharmacists use DRPs to characterise their work in clinical practice, the need for consensus on how to classify and define Drug-Related Problems has developed. A document for the classification of DRPs, produced by researchers involved in the multi-centre study, has been distributed to pharmacists and other medical professionals in Norway for “real life testing.”

### A Norwegian definition and interest group

A demand for a Norwegian definition of clinical pharmacy has become evident over the last year. Although many European countries have focused on this before, this is valuable work for Norwegian pharmacists as it generates a great deal of discussion as to what clinical pharmacy practice in Norway should

encompass and how to develop the area further. A consensus group is being established in order to finalise a national definition for clinical pharmacy.

The majority of clinical pharmacists in Norwegian hospitals are members of the Clinical Pharmacists Association (CPA), a special-interest group that serves as a platform for collaboration and sharing of ideas and experiences that is part of the Norwegian Association of Hospital Pharmacists. Once a year, the CPA holds an assembly where current issues of clinical pharmacy are discussed through meetings and lectures.

One of the major tasks of the CPA is to build a network for Norwegian clinical pharmacists, but in the last two years it has also established relationships with pharmacists in Denmark and Sweden. Health systems in the Scandinavian countries are very similar, which makes cooperation between the countries especially useful. Last April the CPA organised the Scandinavian Idea Forum, a meeting in Norway for clinical pharmacists from all three countries. Approximately 35 people came for two intensive and exciting days of presenting and discussing ideas, projects and problems in clinical pharmacy.

### Pharmacists as health professionals

Before 1999 pharmacists in Norway were by law not regarded as “health professionals” in the same manner as doctors and nurses. To some degree, this has affected how pharmacists in Norway view themselves professionally and how other health care professions consider them. It has taken time for pharmacists to develop an identity as health professionals, but one sign of progress is that some clinical pharmacists

have started documenting clinical activities in patients’ medical records. This is an important step forward to recognition of the responsible actions taken by pharmacists within the multidisciplinary teams.

Norway hospital pharmacists are looking forward to positive developments over the next years, including a national academic opportunity to specialise in the absorbing field of clinical pharmacy.

### Authors

Malin Davidsson, MScPharm (see photo left)  
Lovisenberg Hospital Pharmacy  
17 Lovisenberggate  
N-0456 Oslo, Norway  
malin.davidsson@apotek.no

Mette Maja Bredal Teigen, MScPharm,  
MScClinPharm (see photo right)  
Diakonhjemmet Hospital Pharmacy  
Postboks 23, Vinderen  
N-0319 Oslo, Norway  
mette.teigen@diakonsyke.no

### References

1. Blix HS, Viktil KK, Reikvam A, et al. The majority of hospitalised patients have drug-related problems: results from a prospective study in general hospitals. *Eur J Clin Pharmacol* 2004; 60:651-8.
2. Viktil KK, Blix HS, Reikvam A, et al. Comparison of drug-related problems in different patient groups. *Annals of Pharmacotherapy* 2004; 38(6):942-8.
3. Blix HS, Viktil KK, Moger TA, et al. Characteristics of drug-related problems discussed by hospital pharmacists in multidisciplinary teams. Accepted for publication in *Pharm World & Science*.
4. Viktil KK, Blix HS, Moger TA, et al. Interview of patients by pharmacists contributes significantly to the identification of drug-related problems (DRPs). *Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety* 2006; Apr 6.