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# New centres to carry out more clinical trials in Norway

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FROM THE SPECIALTIES

INGER MARIE SKOIE

Inger Marie Skoie, researcher and senior consultant at the Department of Dermatology, Stavanger University Hospital, and head of the NorTrials Inflammation Centre.

The author has completed the ICMJE form and declares the following conflicts of interest: Participated in advisory groups and held lectures for Novartis, Eli-Lilly, Janssen, AbbVie and Pfizer.

JAN GUNNAR SKOGÅS

Jan Gunnar Skogås, medical technology background, CEO and head of department for the Operating Room of the Future research infrastructure at St. Olavs Hospital, Trondheim University Hospital/Norwegian University of Science and Technology, head of the NorTrials Medical Devices Centre, head of the NorMIT (Norwegian Centre for Minimally Invasive Image Guided Therapy and Medical Technologies) national infrastructure, and clinical director and head of department at Røros Hospital – St. Olavs Hospital, Trondheim University Hospital.

The author has completed the ICMJE form and declares no conflicts of interest.

THOMAS LANGØ

Thomas Langø, senior researcher at St. Olavs Hospital, Trondheim University Hospital and SINTEF (Medical Technology research group), medical director of the NorTrials Medical Devices Centre and the Norwegian National Advisory Unit for Ultrasound and Image-Guided Therapy. Member of the National Committee for Medical and Health Research Ethics and the board of advisors for The Operating Room of the Future, Research Department, St. Olavs Hospital, Trondheim University Hospital.

The author has completed the ICMJE form and declares no conflicts of interest.

KJELL-MORTEN MYHR

Kjell-Morten Myhr, professor at the University of Bergen and senior consultant, Department of Neurology, Haukeland University Hospital. Head of Neuro-SysMed and the NorTrials Brain Health Centre. Member of the board of advisors for the Multiple Sclerosis Association and the group of MS specialists in Sykehusinnkjøp (the Norwegian Hospital Procurement Trust), and head of the working group that prepared the national clinical guidelines for diagnostics and treatment of multiple sclerosis.

The author has completed the ICMJE form and declares the following conflicts of interest: Received lecture fees from Biogen, Merck, Novartis, Roche and Sanofi, and participated in clinical trials organised by Biogen, Merck, Novartis, Otivio, Roche and Sanofi.

#### PEDER LANGELAND MYHRE

Peder Langeland Myhre, associate professor at the University of Oslo and acting senior consultant at the Department of Cardiology, Akershus University Hospital. Head of the NorTrials Cardiovascular Centre and deputy head of the working group for heart failure, Norwegian Cardiological Society, and editor of the Hjerteforum journal.

The author has completed the ICMJE form and declares the following conflicts of interest: Participated in clinical trials by and/or received lecture fees from Amarin, AstraZeneca, AmGen, Bayer, Boehringer Ingelheim, Bristol Myers Squibb, Novartis and Novo Nordisk.

#### RASMUS GOLL

Rasmus Goll, associate professor, head of the Gastroenterology and Nutrition Research Group at the University of Tromsø, Arctic University of Norway, and senior consultant at the Medical Department, University Hospital of North Norway. Head of the NorTrials Gastrointestinal Centre, head of the Northern Norway Regional Committee for Medical and Health Research, and head of the Gastroenterological Society of Northern Norway.

The author has completed the ICMJE form and declares no conflicts of interest.

#### SIGNE ØIEN FRETLAND

Signe Øien Fretland, cand.pharm. Engaged in the start-up and coordination of clinical trials in the pharmaceutical industry and at Oslo University Hospital. Since 2022, head of the NorTrials coordinating unit, which is the operational component of the programme.

The author has completed the ICMJE form and declares no conflicts of interest.

#### ÅSLAUG HELLAND

[ahelland@medisin.uio.no](mailto:ahelland@medisin.uio.no)

Åslaug Helland, specialist in oncology, research director at the Cancer Clinic, Oslo University Hospital, professor at the University of Oslo and head of the NorTrials Cancer Centre.

The author has completed the ICMJE form and declares the following conflicts of interest: Has held lectures for and participated in advisory meetings with AbbVie, Takeda, AstraZeneca, Roche, Pfizer, Janssen, Eli Lilly, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Pierre Fabre, Bayer, MSD, Novartis, Merck and Sanofi, for which any fees have gone to Oslo University Hospital. Has received grants for self-initiated research from Roche, AstraZeneca, Novartis, Incyte, Eli Lilly, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Ultimovacs and Illumina.

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## **Six NorTrials centres for clinical research have been established at the university hospitals. Their objective is to increase the number of clinical trials and improve patient treatment.**

We know that patients treated in institutions where clinical trials are undertaken have better outcomes [\(1\)](#). This is in part because the activity around clinical research improves the quality of the treatment provided to patients. Since 2000, the number of clinical trials in Norway has decreased, and patients, institutions and the political management now want to reverse this trend. The National Action Plan for Clinical Trials, launched by the Ministry of Health and Care Services in 2021, aims to integrate clinical research in daily hospital activities and patient treatment and double the number of clinical trials in the period 2021–25 [\(2\)](#).

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## **NorTrials**

NorTrials, a public-private partnership between the specialist health service and the pharmaceutical and medical device industries, was established in 2022 as part of the investment in clinical research. The government commissioned the implementation of NorTrials to the regional health trusts. NorTrials is organised through a board of directors, a coordinating unit and six NorTrials centres. The centres are located at the university hospitals throughout the country and receive annual grants over the state budget for establishing infrastructure and networks in their respective specialties. Focus will be on offering more clinical trials to Norwegian patients, locally as well as nationally, in collaboration with the industry and patient organisations. In addition to the centres, support functions for performing clinical trials throughout the country (equivalent to 10–15 full-time positions) is included in the funding, as well as promotion of Norway as an attractive country for clinical trials, in collaboration with Innovation Norway.

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## **Research areas**

The NorTrials centres were selected in collaboration between the regional health authorities and the industrial partners.

*NorTrials Gastrointestinal* is located at the University Hospital of North Norway. The hospital's gastroenterology and nutrition research group has initiated and implemented clinical trials and established a network of representatives from all health regions over many years. The centre is affiliated with the endoscopy unit, since many trials related to gastrointestinal diseases involve procedures that need to be performed there.

*NorTrials Brain Health* is located at Haukeland University Hospital and organised through the R&D department, Section for Research and Innovation, and the Neurology Department at Neuro-SysMed, Centre for Clinical Research. As indicated by its name, the centre will focus on brain health, which includes the specialties of neurology, neurosurgery, psychiatry and neuropaediatrics.

*NorTrials Inflammation* is located at Stavanger University Hospital. The hospital's research group for clinical immunology has for many years engaged in interdisciplinary research on autoimmune and chronic inflammatory diseases.

*NorTrials Cardiovascular* is located at Akershus University Hospital. The NorTrials centre will be part of an established clinical research community in cardiology, with a broad range of competencies and established networks nationally and internationally. The centre will collaborate closely with the hospital's data warehouse, which will enable valuable insight into the patient population for purposes of recruitment to clinical trials.

*NorTrials Cancer* is located at Oslo University Hospital. The centre will focus on practical assistance and advice related to clinical trials. A good relationship with hospitals and industrial partners has already been established, including through the IMPRESSNorway study and the Norwegian Centre for Clinical Cancer Research (MATRIX).

*NorTrials Medical Devices* is located at the Operating Room of the Future, Department of Research, St. Olavs Hospital, Trondheim University Hospital. Through nationwide collaboration, the NorTrials Centre for Medical Devices will help improve coordination and increase the number of hospitals that participate in trials involving medical equipment, in cooperation with national and international industry partners.

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