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# NorTrials drives growth in Norwegian clinical trials

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FROM THE SPECIALTIES

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The author has completed the ICMJE form and declares the following conflicts of interest: he has been involved in clinical trials for and/or received speaker fees from Amarin, AstraZeneca, Amgen, Bayer, Boehringer Ingelheim, BMS, Eli Lilly, Gentian, Novartis, Novo Nordisk, Pharmacosmos, Roche, Sanofi, Us2.ai and Vifor, and has received research funding for investigator-initiated research from AstraZeneca via Akershus University Hospital.

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## **NorTrials has helped increase the focus on clinical trials in Norway.**

NorTrials was established by Erna Solberg's government in 2022 as one of the initiatives in the National Action Plan for Clinical Trials. The initiative is a partnership between the specialist health service and the pharmaceutical and medical device industry [\(1\)](#). Its aim was to integrate clinical trials into routine patient care, double the number of trials and achieve 5 % patient participation in the specialist health service.

These goals have not yet been achieved, but the authorities remain committed to their objectives. A revised action plan is scheduled to be launched around the turn of the year 2025/26 [\(2\)](#), and the government has continued its NorTrials funding in the 2026 national budget [\(3\)](#).

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## Six centres established

In the January 2023 issue of the Journal of the Norwegian Medical Association (4), we described the six NorTrials centres established at university hospitals as a cornerstone of the initiative's organisational framework. In addition, national activity was to be coordinated by the NorTrials Coordinating Unit at Oslo University Hospital.

Since then, national networks in the relevant specialties have been established, clinical trial nurses and coordinators have begun collaborating across regions, and clinical trial expertise has been strengthened through training courses and seminars. Regular pipeline meetings with industry have helped Norwegian research groups strengthen their competitiveness in securing clinical trials in Norway, while international forums have increased their visibility, which is an important factor for being chosen as a study centre. Collaboration with international sister organisations, such as Denmark's Trial Nation and the recently established Swedish SweTrial, has strengthened the Nordic position, and partnerships across countries have enhanced the region's appeal for global trials.

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## More important than ever

In addition, the NorTrials Coordinating Unit has established a feasibility portal (5), providing a *single point of entry* for industry. Clinical trials outside the six centres' therapeutic areas can also use this portal.

All centres, as well as the coordinating unit, continue to operate successfully. Several of the centres have also expanded to include additional specialties, with further expansion underway.

Considerably more research groups are now supportive of industry-funded trials than in 2022, and attitudes are now more positive to collaboration between the health industry and hospitals. Nevertheless, targeted efforts are still needed. Some research groups remain cautious about collaboration with industry, and the lack of resources for conducting trials is a pressing issue at several hospitals. International competition to secure clinical trials is also much tougher now than when NorTrials was established. Our work is therefore more important than ever.

It is still possible to become involved in industry-funded clinical trials in your field. Please contact us for further details.

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