

Injecting drug use among inmates in Norwegian prisons

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BACKGROUND

► People who inject drugs (PWID) have several barriers to antiviral treatment for chronic hepatitis C (CHC). Treatment during incarceration may be a way of overcoming some of these barriers. In 2014 the number of persons starting prison terms in Norway was 6,576 of which around 40% would serve more than 90 days in prison. About 50% of PWID in Norway have CHC. The total number of individuals with CHC in Norway is supposed to be about 20,000. The objectives of the present study were to:

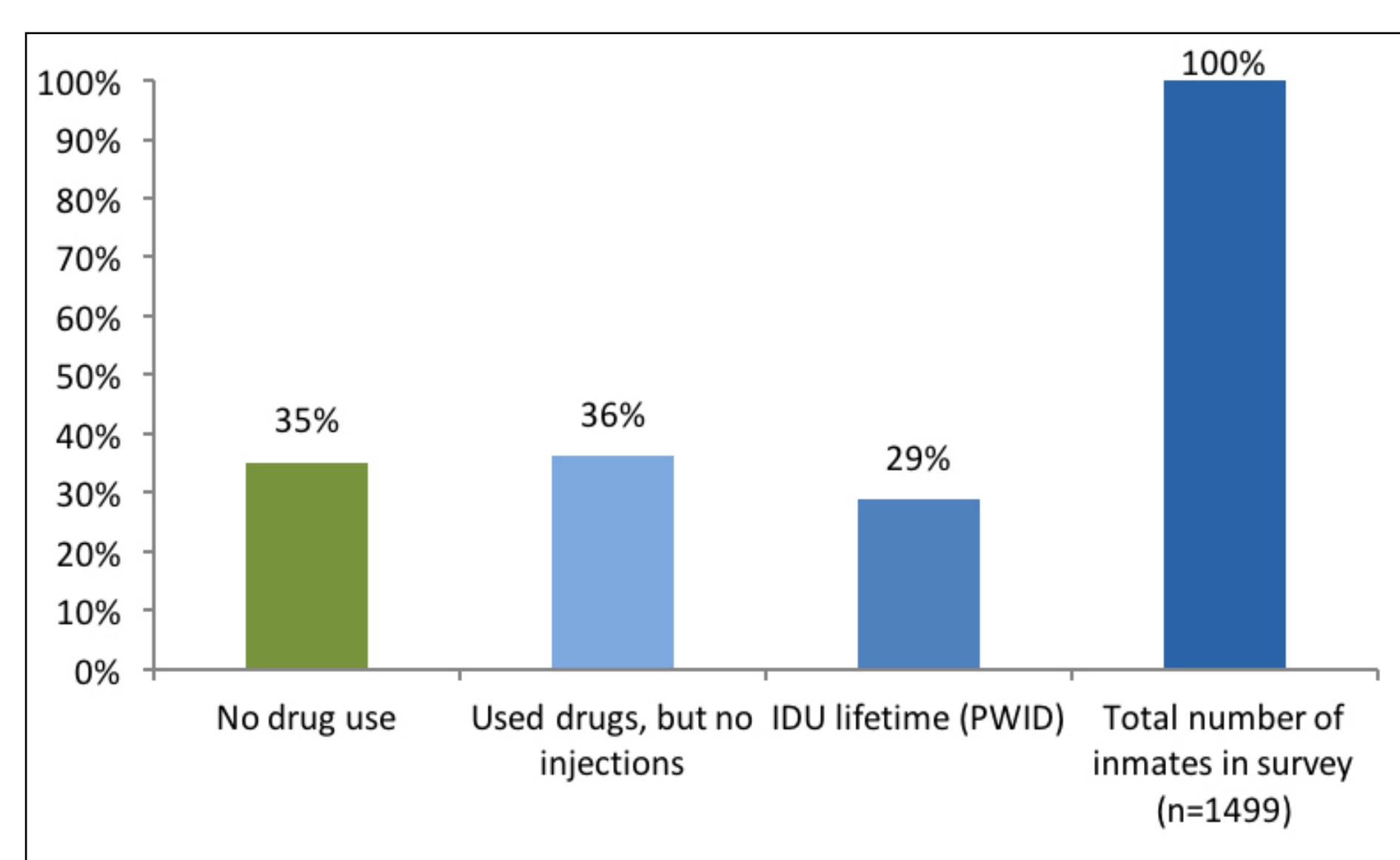
- Explore injecting drug use (IDU) among prisoners in Norway lifetime, last six months before incarceration, and during incarceration
- Estimate the potential for antiviral treatment of CHC during incarceration.

METHODS

► The study was based on a large survey on mental health and substance abuse in Norwegian prisons performed 2013 and 2014, managed by one of the authors (AB) [1].

Prisoners from 57 of the totally 63 prison units in Norway participated in the survey. Inclusion criteria were age over 18 years and sufficient understanding of Norwegian, English, French, Russian or German. Inmates were recruited based on the availability and willingness to participate. For the estimation of the prevalence of CHC among PWID in prisons, results from studies on other PWID populations in Norway have been applied.

Figure 1 Lifetime prevalence of drug use among Norwegian inmates according to all inmates in the survey 2013-2014.



Abbreviations: IDU, injecting drug use; PWID, people who inject drugs

Figure 3 Prevalence of injection drug use (IDU) during incarceration according to A) IDU lifetime and B) all inmates in the survey.

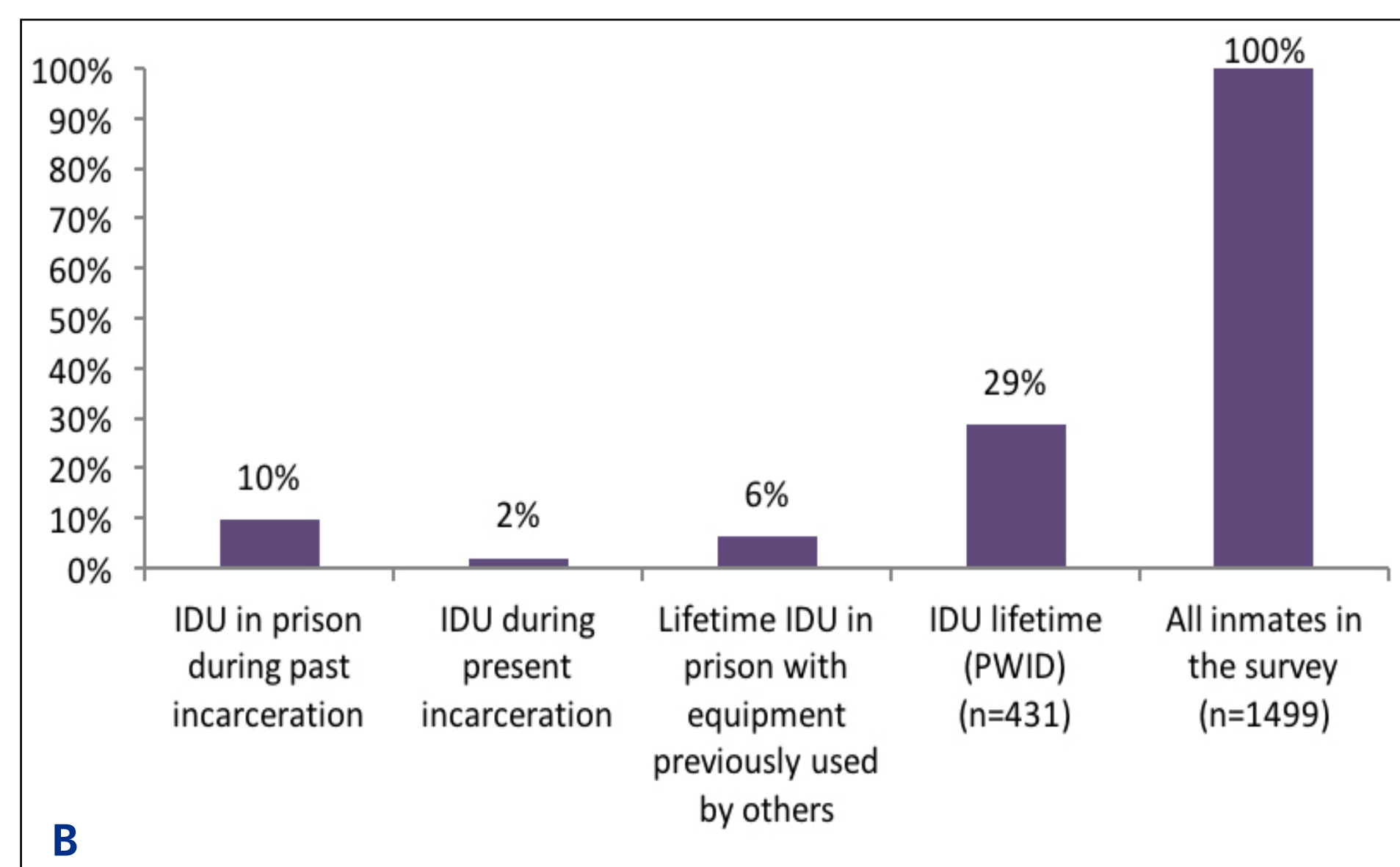
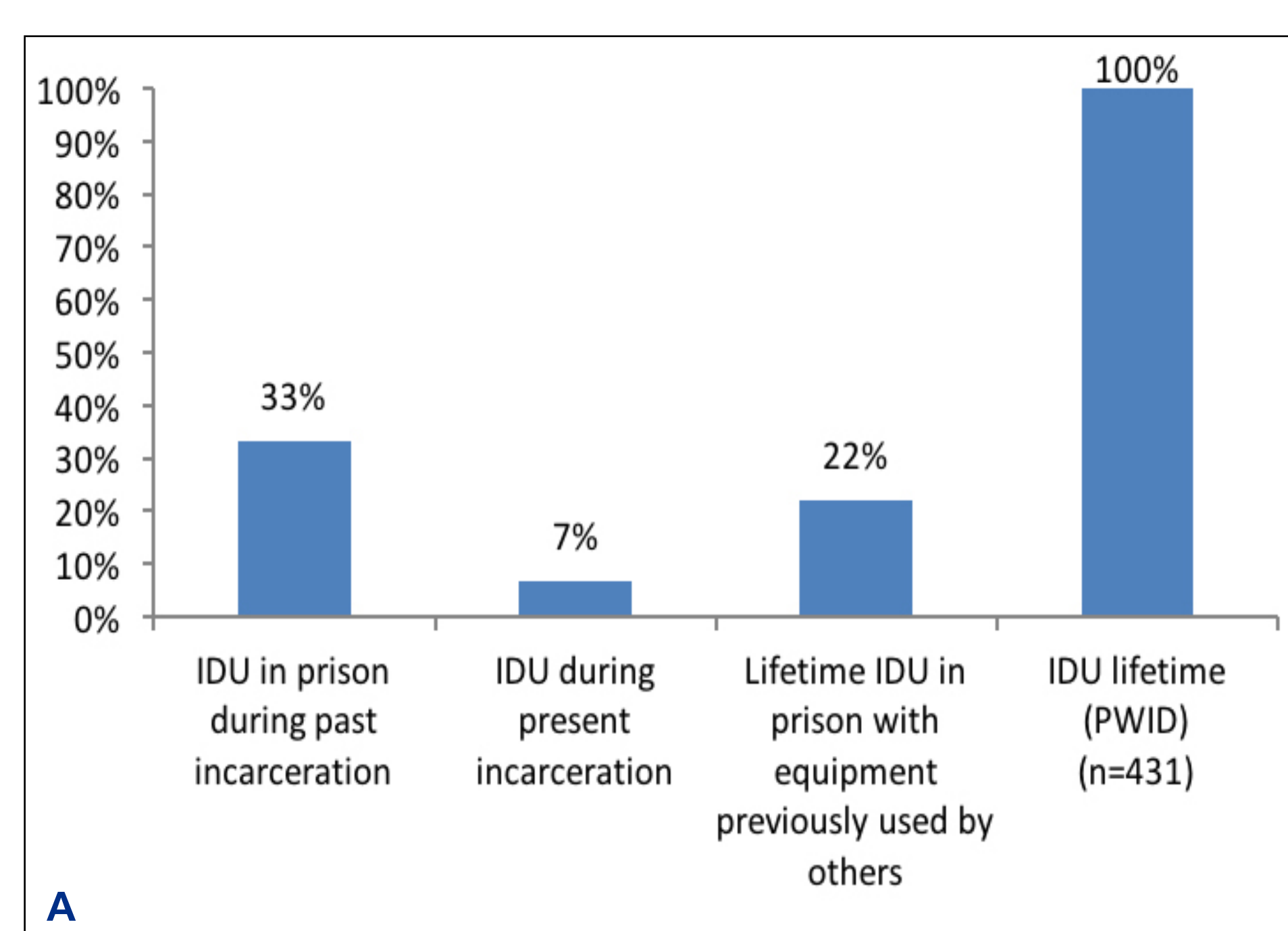
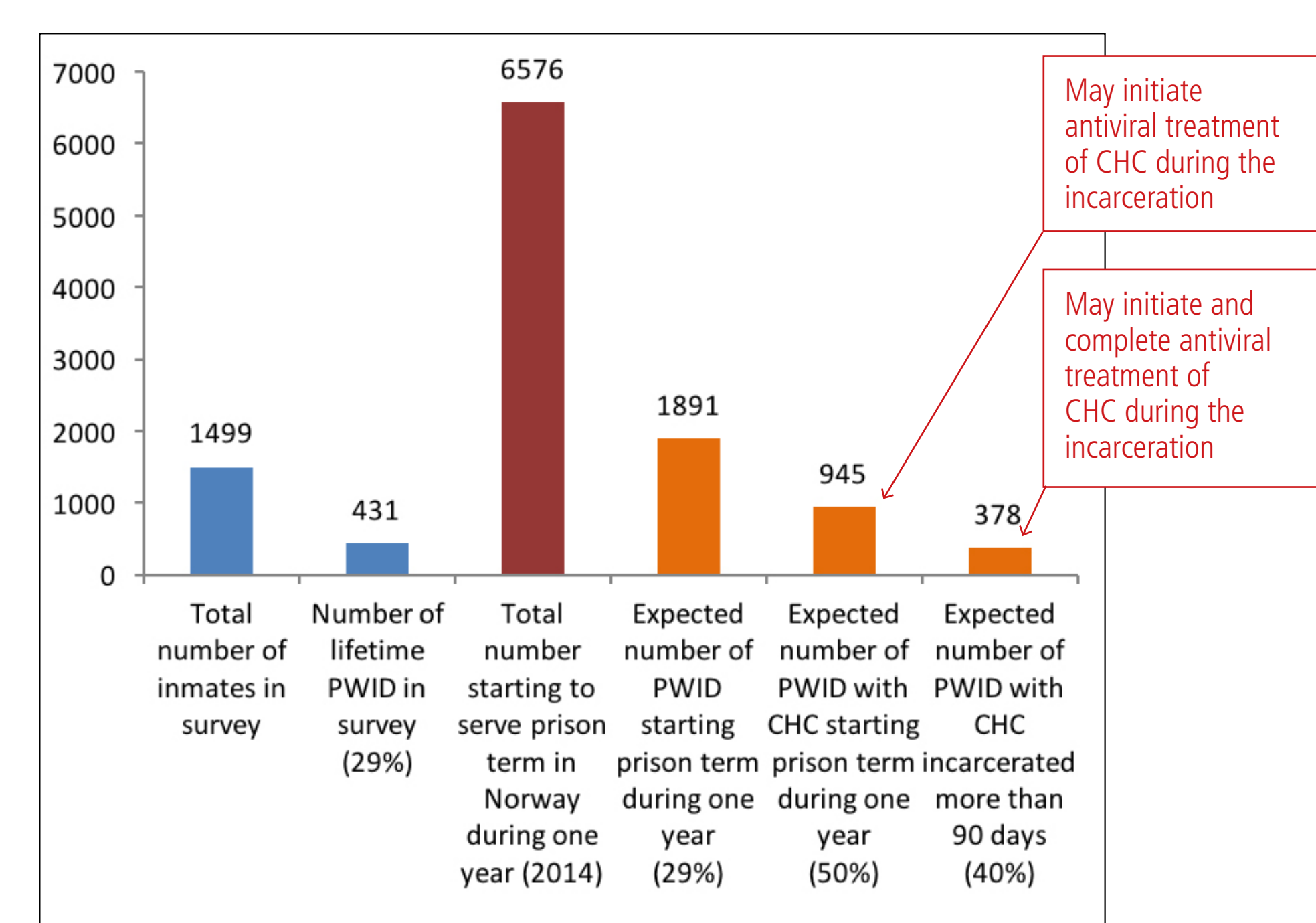


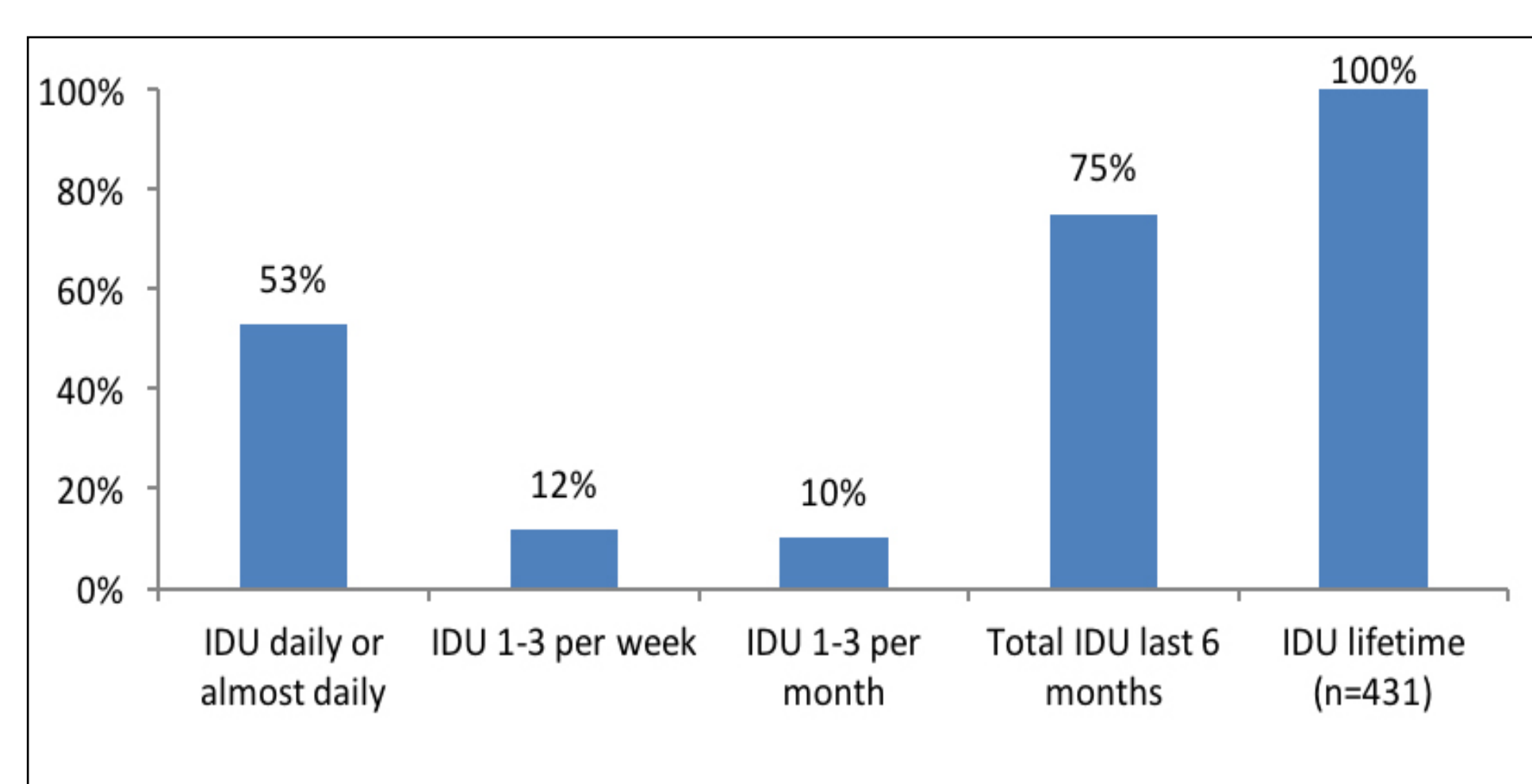
Figure 4 Estimation of the number of inmates with CHC available for antiviral treatment during one year in Norway.



Legend: Survey (blue), Statistics Norway (red), Estimations (orange)

Abbreviations: PWID, people who inject drugs; CHC, chronic hepatitis C

Figure 2 Injecting drug use (IDU) last 6 months before incarceration according to IDU lifetime 2013-2014



CONCLUSION

► If the studied inmates were representative of the total prison population, prisons may be an important arena for antiviral treatment of CHC among PWID.

RESULTS

- Of 1499 participating prisoners (males 93%), 431 (29%) reported IDU lifetime (PWID) (Figure 1).
- 75% of lifetime PWID had injected drugs last 6 months before the incarceration (Figure 2)
- IDU during past incarcerations were reported by 143/431 (33%) of lifetime PWID, 10% of all inmates. IDU during incarceration with syringe or needle previously used by others at least once, were reported by 95 (66% of those who had injected drugs in prison, and 22% of lifetime injectors) (Figure 3)
- About 900 inmates with CHC may possibly initiate DAA-treatment in prison during one year. For about 300 it would be possible to complete the medication before the release from incarceration (Figure 4). Assumptions:
 - The fraction of inmates with lifetime IDU experience (PWID) in Norwegian prisons is the same as among the participants in the survey.
 - About 50% of Norwegian PWID have CHC.

References

1. Bukten A, Lund IO, Rognli EB, Stavseth MR, Lobmaier P, Skurtveit S, Clausen T, Kunoe N. The Norwegian Offender Mental Health and Addiction Study - Design and Implementation of a National Survey and Prospective Cohort Study. *Subst Abuse* 2015;9:59-66.

Disclosures: Kielland has given sponsored lectures for MSD and Abbvie. Bukten declares no conflict of interest.