
Implementing a National Air ambulance service in Denmark Why ?

Medical Director

Prehospital Care Central Denmark Region

Major Medical Incident Coordination Center

Trauma Center – Aarhus University Hospital

Anaesthetist staffed HEMS More than air ambulance

The purpose of HEMS Is:

1. Bring the physician to the patient
2. Bring the patient to the right facility - at once or secondary as quickly as possible
3. Use the technology for the job



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- 1. Myths and facts about DK**
 - 2. HEMS opponents and threats**
 - 3. Health Care Reform 1.1.2007**
 - 4. Conclusion**

Why a National HEMS in DK ?

- There *is* a local HEMS in DK: HEMS in Northern Germany act in a cross-border cooperation
- From the Danish-German boarder to Hamburg are a total 4 helicopters !
- So *not why* - but - *why not* HEMS

DK



”Denmark does not need a HEMS”

Myths and facts

”Denmark is such a flat country”...

Roger Pihl – Norway:

Guide to the
Mountains in
Denmark

183 places more than
100 m above sea

170 m Ejer Baunehøj

170 m Yding Skovhøj

~~147 m Himmelbjerget~~

Erika Frischnecht Christensen



DK is one big helipad

“Denmark is such a small country –
and every place is easy accessible”



- North-south: 360 km
- West-east: 450 km
- Area: 43.000 km²
- 7300 km coastline
- 430 islands
- Approx. 80

inhabited islands

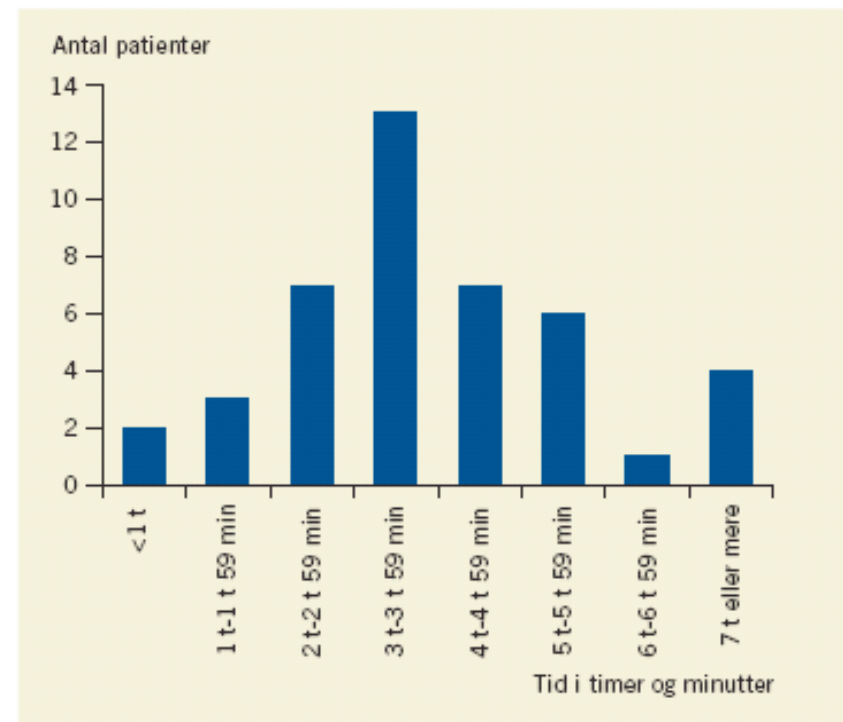
Denmark



- Population: 5.3 Mio.
- 1.7 Mio. in capital area
- 85 % of population in cities
- Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense, Aalborg: Level-1 Trauma center

Short distances Short time intervals ?

Severe head injury
Secondary transfers
From scene of
accident
to
Aarhus Traumacenter
Median 3 h 50 Min
Longest distance 172
km



Opponents and threats

1. Danish Mentality

N. F. S. Grundtvig, 1820
Poet, hymn:

”We are not made
for heights or
storms

To stay on the
ground, serves us
the best ”

Aksel Sandemose:
Janteloven – 1-10

1. Do not think you
are anything
special

10. Do not think that
you can teach us
anything

The Danish people
Are among the most
Happy people!



Testing whether laughter IS the best medicine

2. Paramedic Union

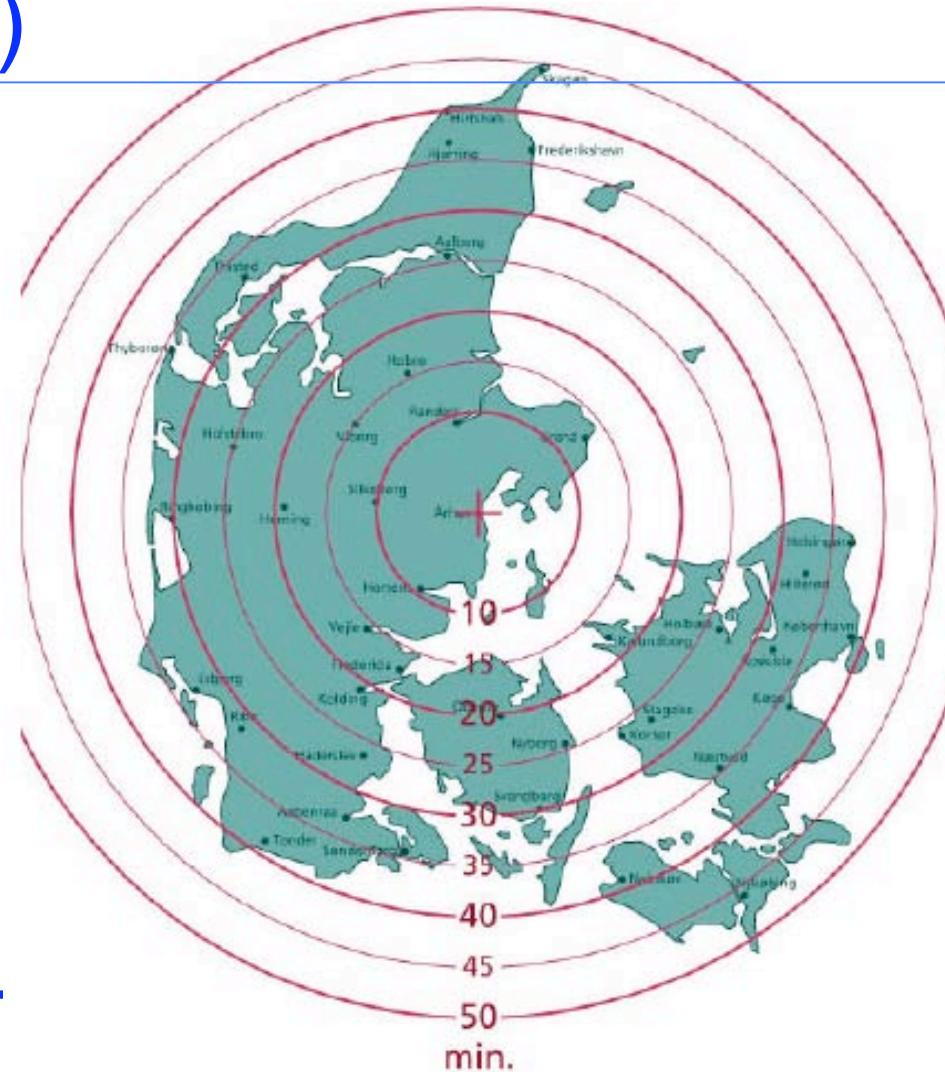
Unions against HEMS

- Afraid of doctors taking "their" job
- In areas with prehospital doctors lot of paramedics support HEMS



3. "The enthusiasts" (Including myself)

BUT:
Change from:
"Do not take
our patients"
To
The four level-1
Traumacentres
cooperate



4. The image

- The image "Cool guys, and fancy toys"

5. "It is so expensive"

National HEMS with

- 4 helicopters,
- pilot, doctor, paramedic or nurse

Approx. 12–15 mio
Euro/year

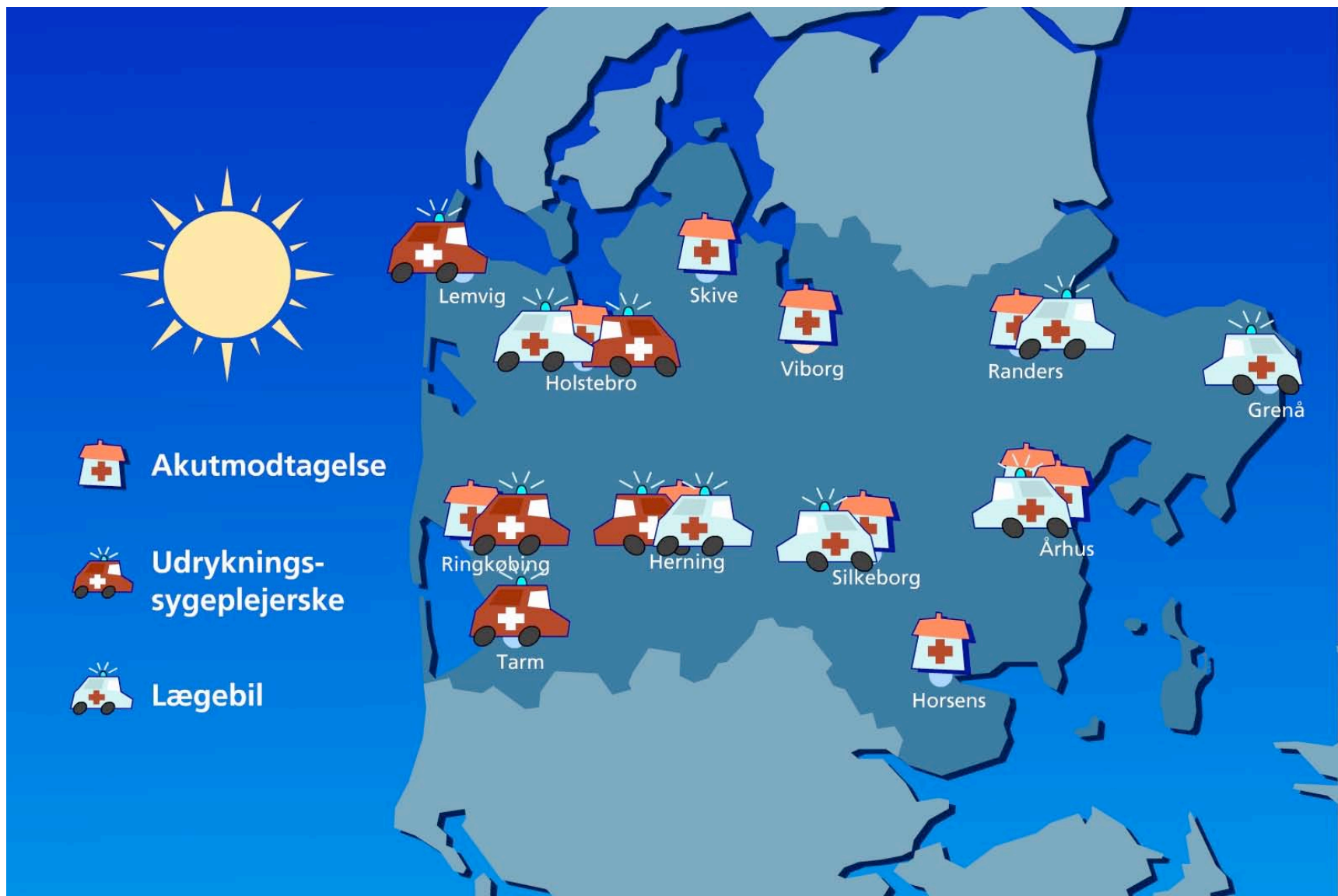
Annual health care cost
1.2 billions Euro

Prehospital costs per
region is about
50 Mio Euro.

Cost-effect similar to
other treatments

6. "The system we have is so good"

- An example: Central Denmark Region



Central Denmark region

40.000 emergency ambulance calls per year

500 paramedics - mean 80 emergencies/year

Doctor to 8500 or nurse to 4000 cases

Daytime: 11 cars - 6 doctors 5 nurses

- Mean: 3 cases per day per unit
- With great variation - 14 in Aarhus to less than one/day



So how about competencies and routine ?

Health Care Reform 1.1.2007

1.1. 2007

Health care reform:

From 14 counties

To 5 regions

Main task is

Health Care



National Board of Health Report on emergency services

Recommendations:

- Emergency Care for 200.000–400.000
- Approx. 25 hospitals with ED - from 40
- National HEMS in DK: 4 day-light-helikopters and 1 fix wing



National HEMS in Denmark ?

So where are we now ?

- Resistance has decreased
- Leading politicians for HEMS
- National Recommendations
- But:
- Who has to pay ?
- Still fear of flying ?



Conclusion

Why national HEMS in Denmark:

1. Bring the physician to the patient
2. Bring the patient to the right facility - at once or secondary as quickly as possible
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Thank you
for your attention

Questions ?

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