

Research, knowledge and policy on iodine and goitre – The case of Norway 1850-2010

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In 2016, an expert committee recommended that Norwegian authorities should introduce means to prevent iodine deficiency. The recommendation took many by surprise, as iodine deficiency and goitre has been considered obliterated in Norway since the 1950s. In some parts of Norway goitre was widespread up to WWII. New Nordic research on iodine and goitre document that iodine deficiency has returned, at least in vulnerable sub-groups. The Nordic countries have taken very different policy actions to handle the population's iodine situation, both in the past and in the present. Different countries may or may not implement measures after scientific advice, depending on political or societal situations in each country. We focus on the science and knowledge production on goitre and iodine in the Norwegian context from approximately 1850 onwards. By mapping issues and actors in this field of research and knowledge on the one hand, and the actions chosen by the relevant authorities on the other, we aim to understand the implementation of policy actions in the field of goitre and iodine. Thus, we study the relationship between the knowledge produced and the policy that followed. We explore the fields of research and disciplines that have taken up iodine and goitre-issues, the influences from international scientific networks and transfer of inspiration and experiences across different institutions and countries to the policy formulation and policy implementation.