



European Monitoring Centre  
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

European joint DRD expert meeting

Lisbon, 29-30 September 2016

# Tramadol-related deaths

## 2016 Survey overview

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Paralel workshop Opioids, medicines and focus on Tramadol

# Background and rationale

- One of the missions of EMCDDA is to collect, register, analyse information on '*emerging trends in polydrug use, including combined use of licit and illicit psychoactive substances*'
- Particular attention to the medicines with high potential for misuse or for which alerts or signals of public health concerns have been reported
- Increase of UK tramadol-related deaths
  - Ad-hoc data collection exercise launched in September 2013: National DRD experts were asked to provide information on Tramadol related deaths registered in their countries. Data were provided by 9 countries.
- A new call for data was launched in 2016

# EMCDDA project on tramadol

- A new call for data was launched in 2016 in view of the new EMCDDA project on misuses of tramadol in the context of poly drug use;
- To be implemented in 2017 with selected number of MS (France, UK, Germany, Sweden) and in collaboration with the EMA in London;
- The objective of the study is to provide a comprehensive overview of tramadol, including its pharmacology and toxicology; availability and legal status, information on the levels of misuse and the risk and harms related with tramadol consumption, in the context of polydrug use,
- Based on the case studies but will strive to provide a European perspective where possible (EMCDDA and EMA) - e.g. data sets and today meeting as a first step

## Short questionnaire on:

- number of deaths
- age
- gender
- trends since 2000
- intentionality
- background on regulation

# Results

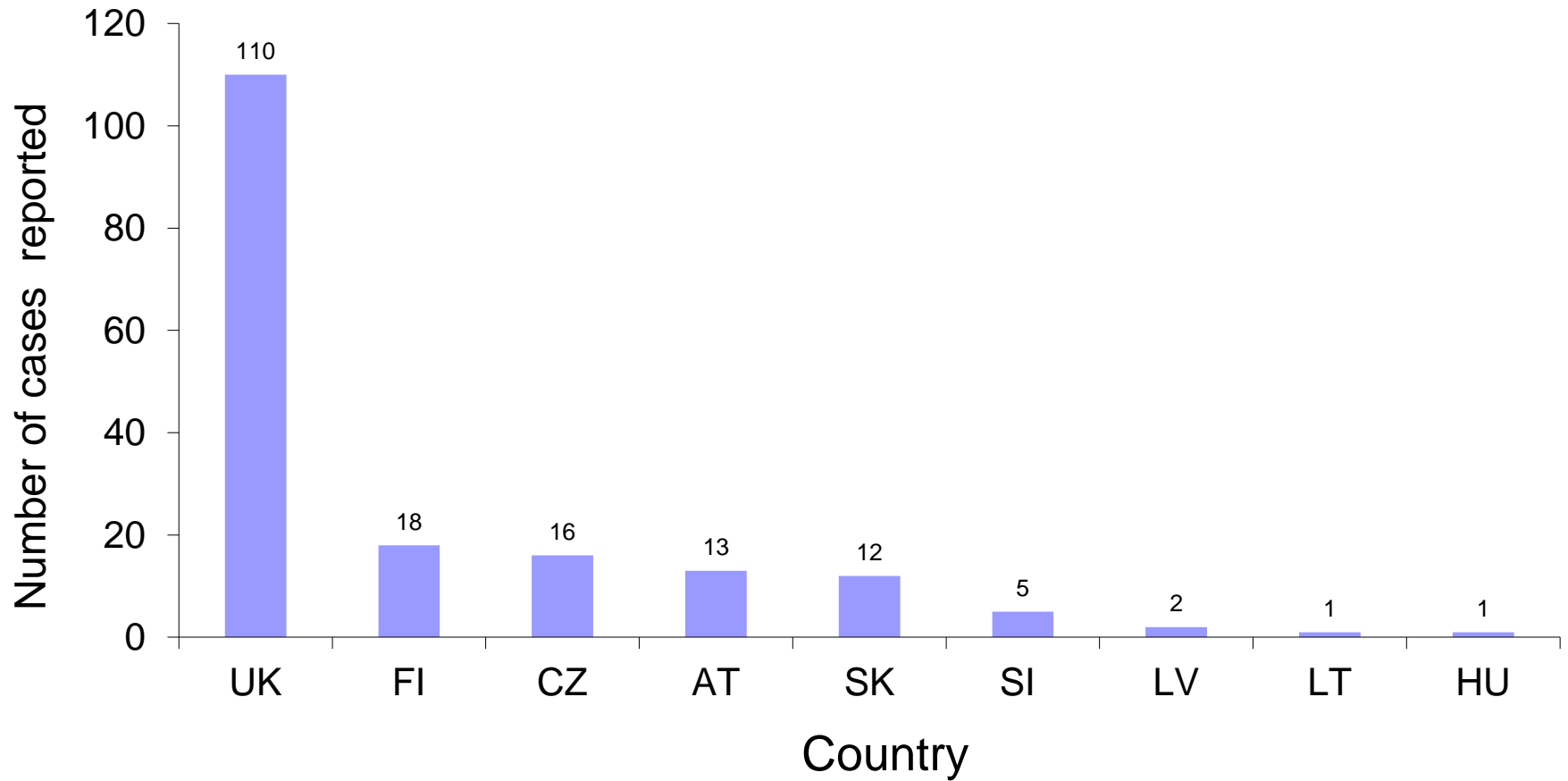
## 13 countries provided data:

Country	2013	2016
Austria	✓	✓
Czech Republic	✓	
Cyprus		✓
Estonia		✓
Finland	✓	✓
France		✓
Hungary	✓	✓
Ireland		✓
Latvia	✓	✓
Lithuania	✓	✓
Slovakia	✓	✓
Slovenia	✓	
Spain		✓
Turkey		✓
United Kingdom	✓	✓

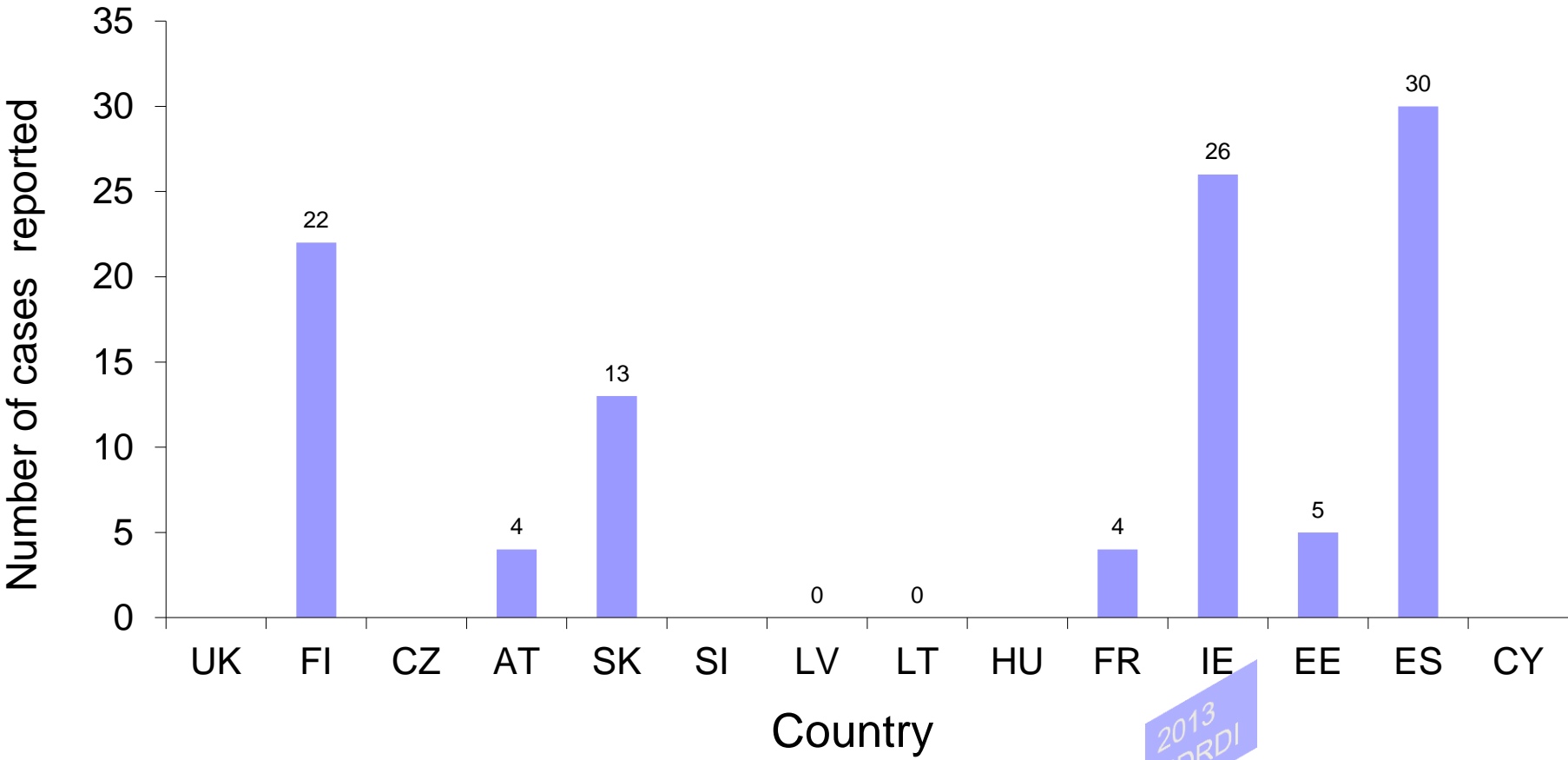
For 2016 survey  
Cyprus,  
Hungary, and  
UK provided  
qualitative  
information only

[emcdda.europa.eu](http://emcdda.europa.eu)

# Tramadol-related deaths – 2013 survey

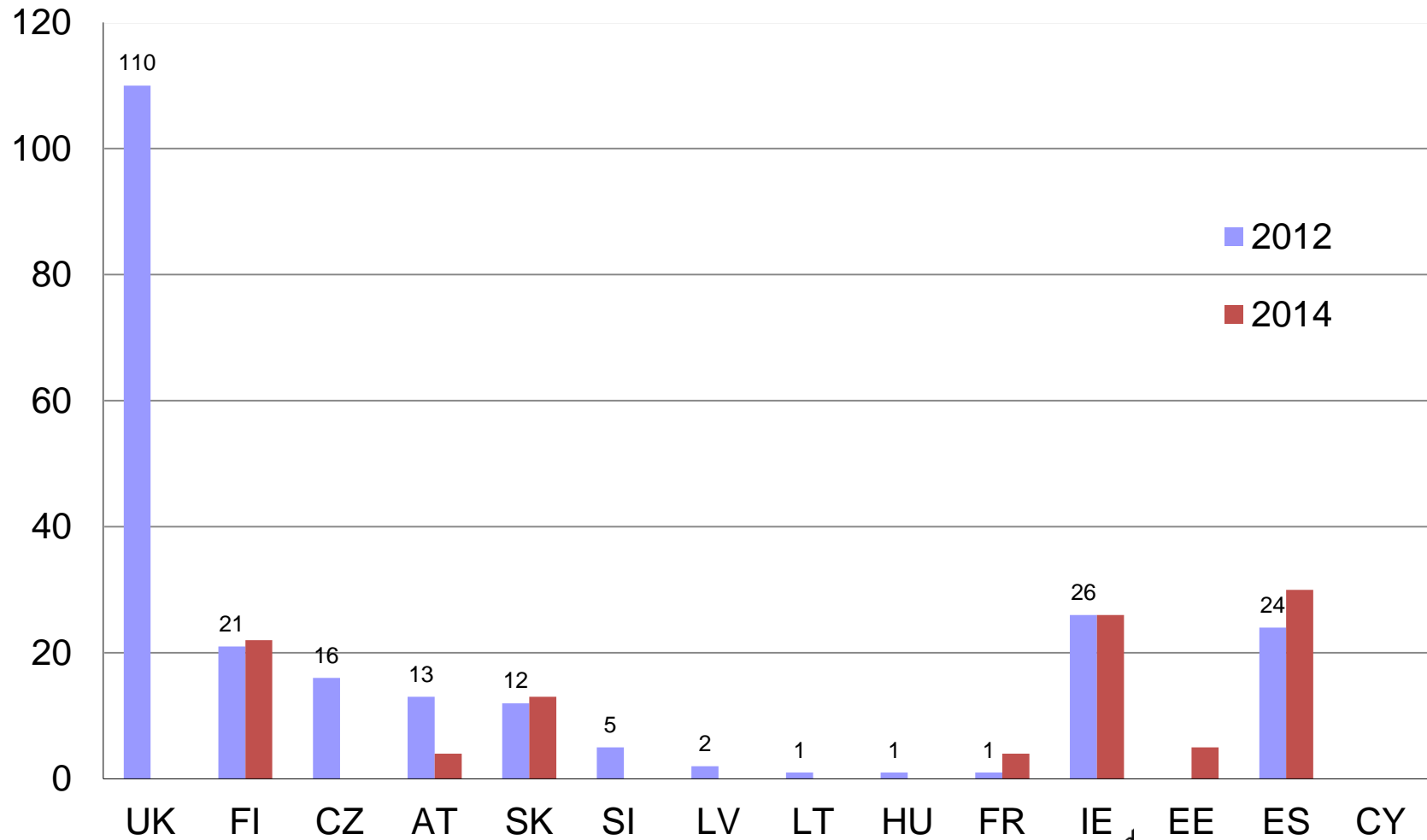


# Tramadol-related deaths – most recent data (2016 survey)



2013  
NDRDI

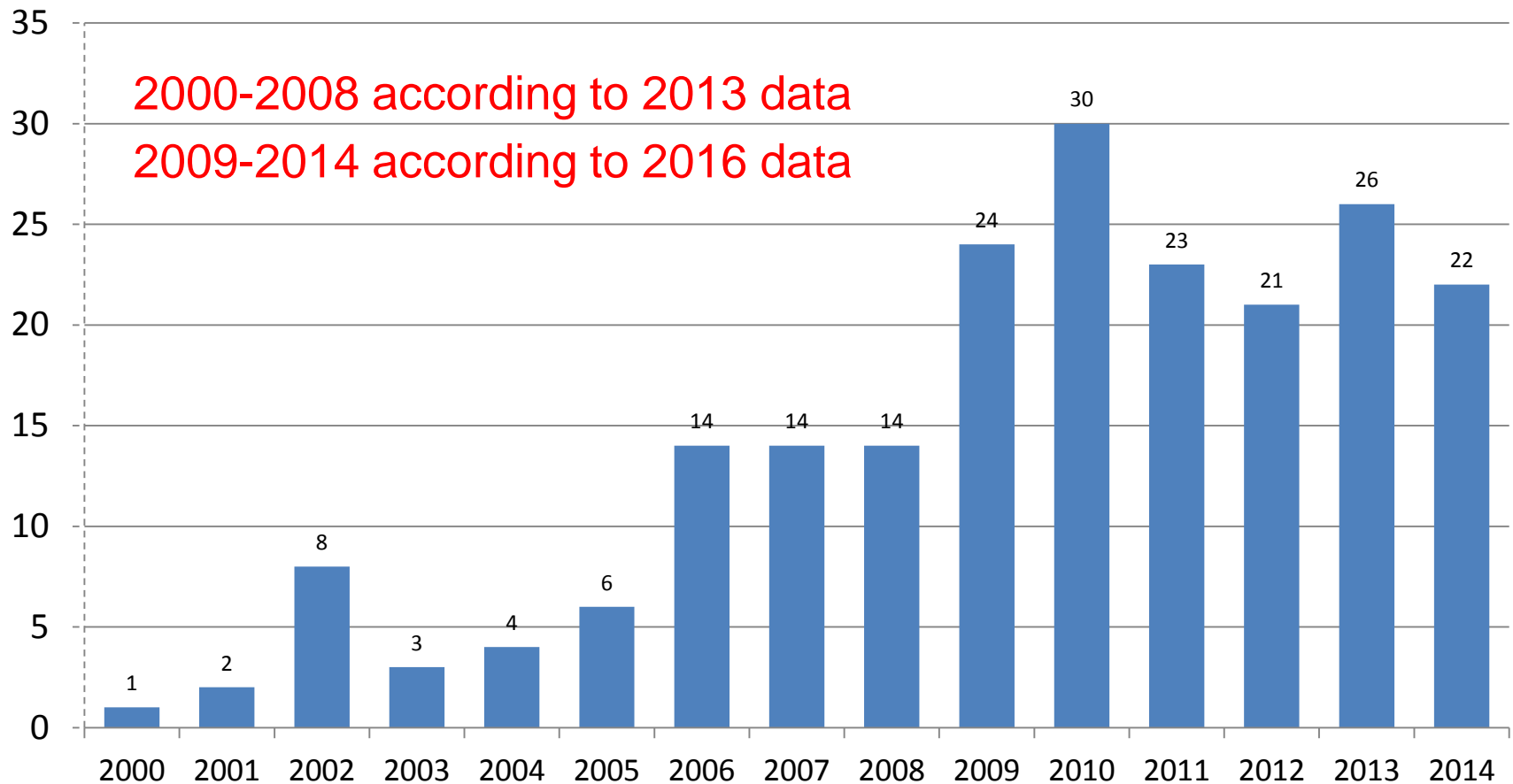
# Tramadol-related deaths – 2013 vs 2016 survey



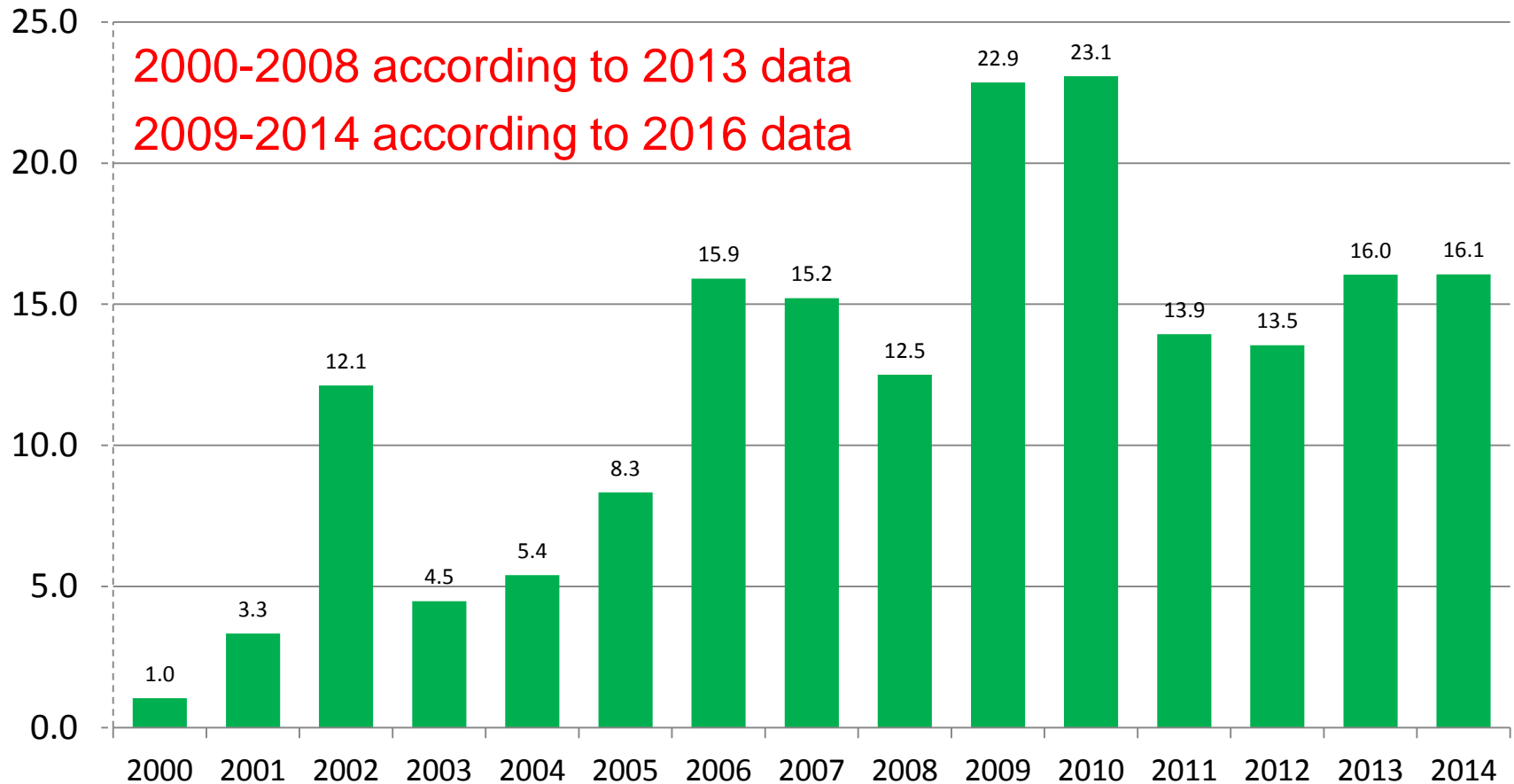
2012 and  
2013  
NDRDI



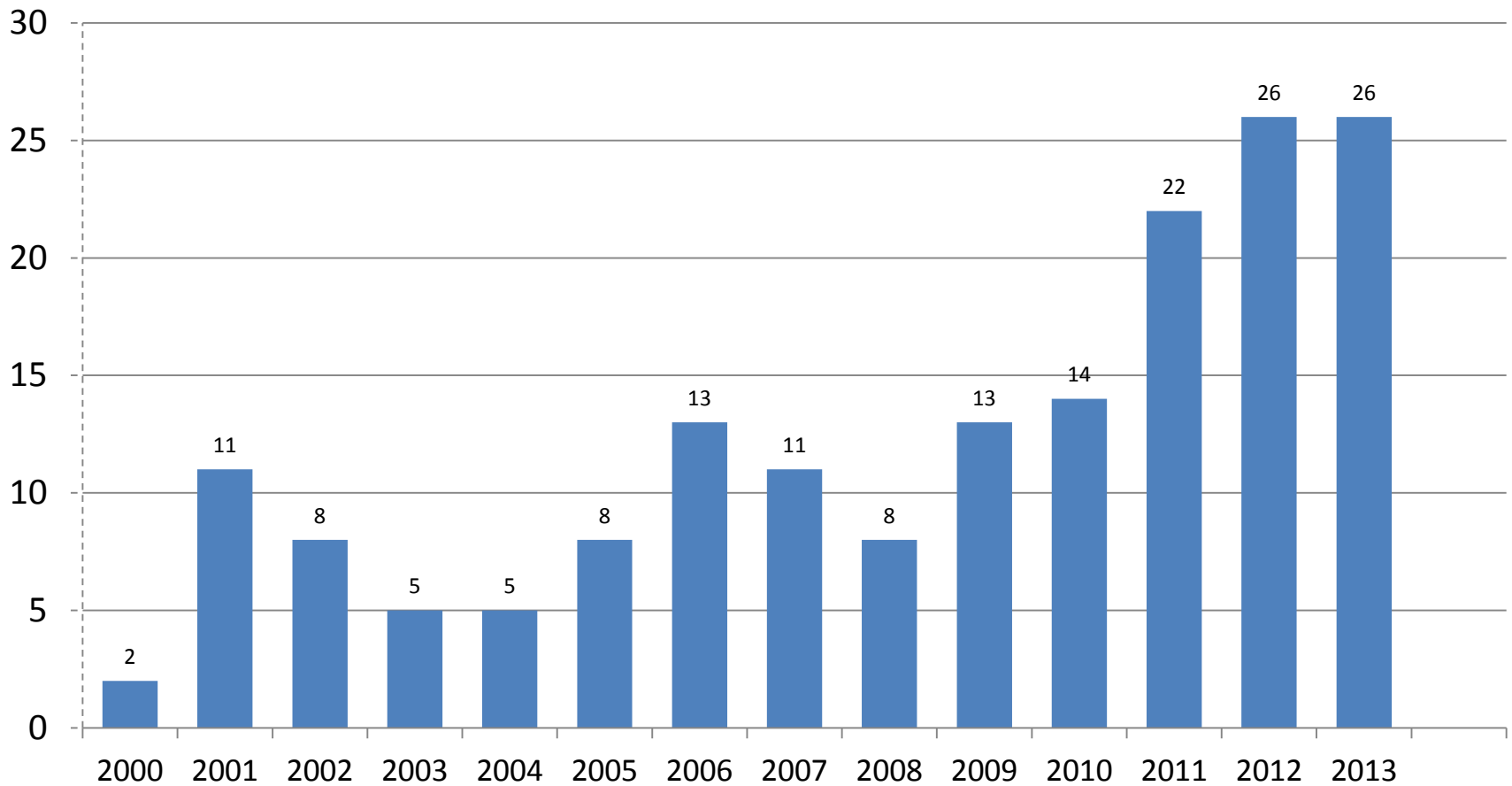
# Finland – trend in the number of tramadol-related deaths



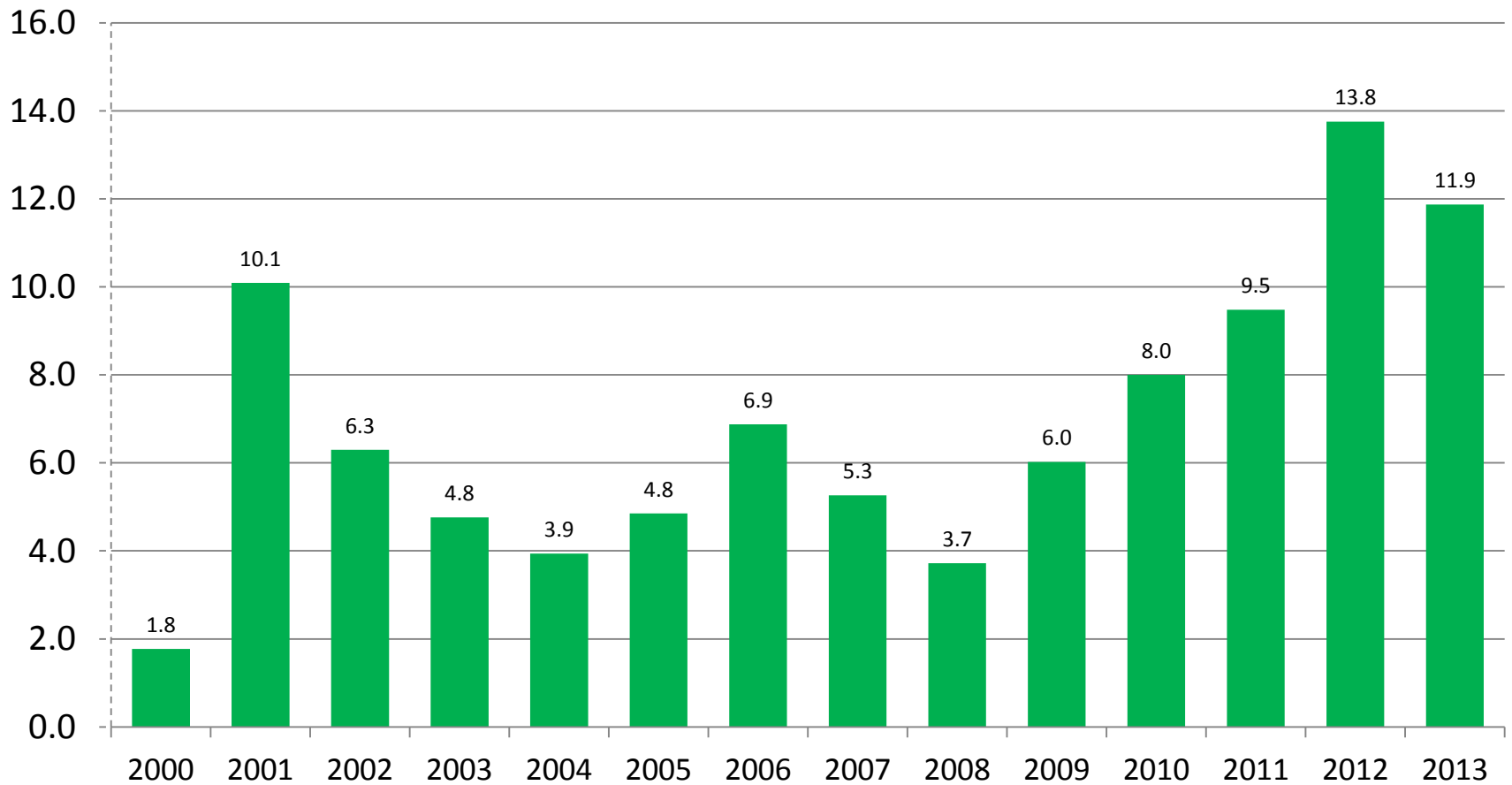
# Finland – trend in the % of tramadol-related deaths (selection D)



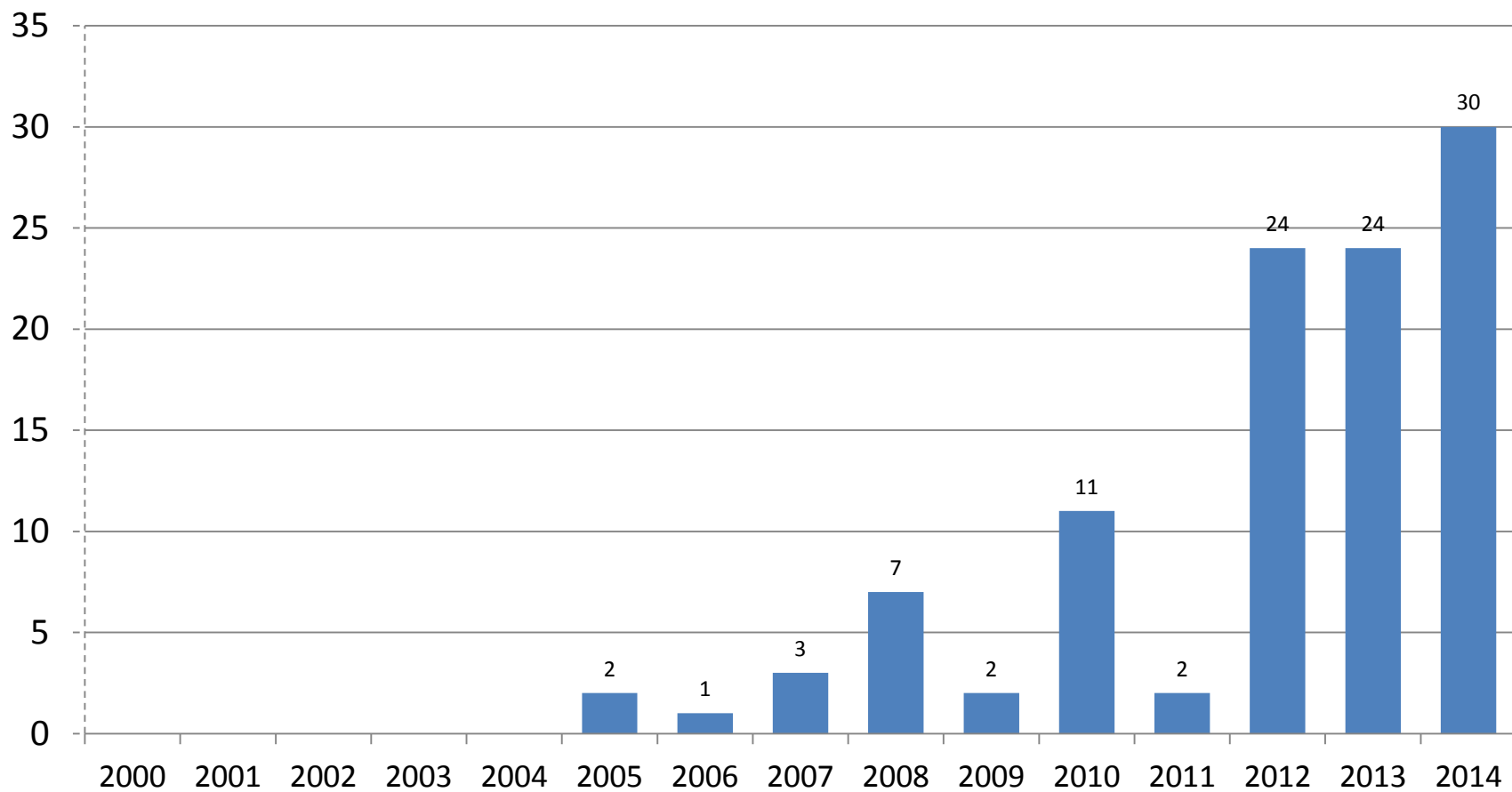
# Ireland – trend in the number of tramadol-related deaths (NDRDI)



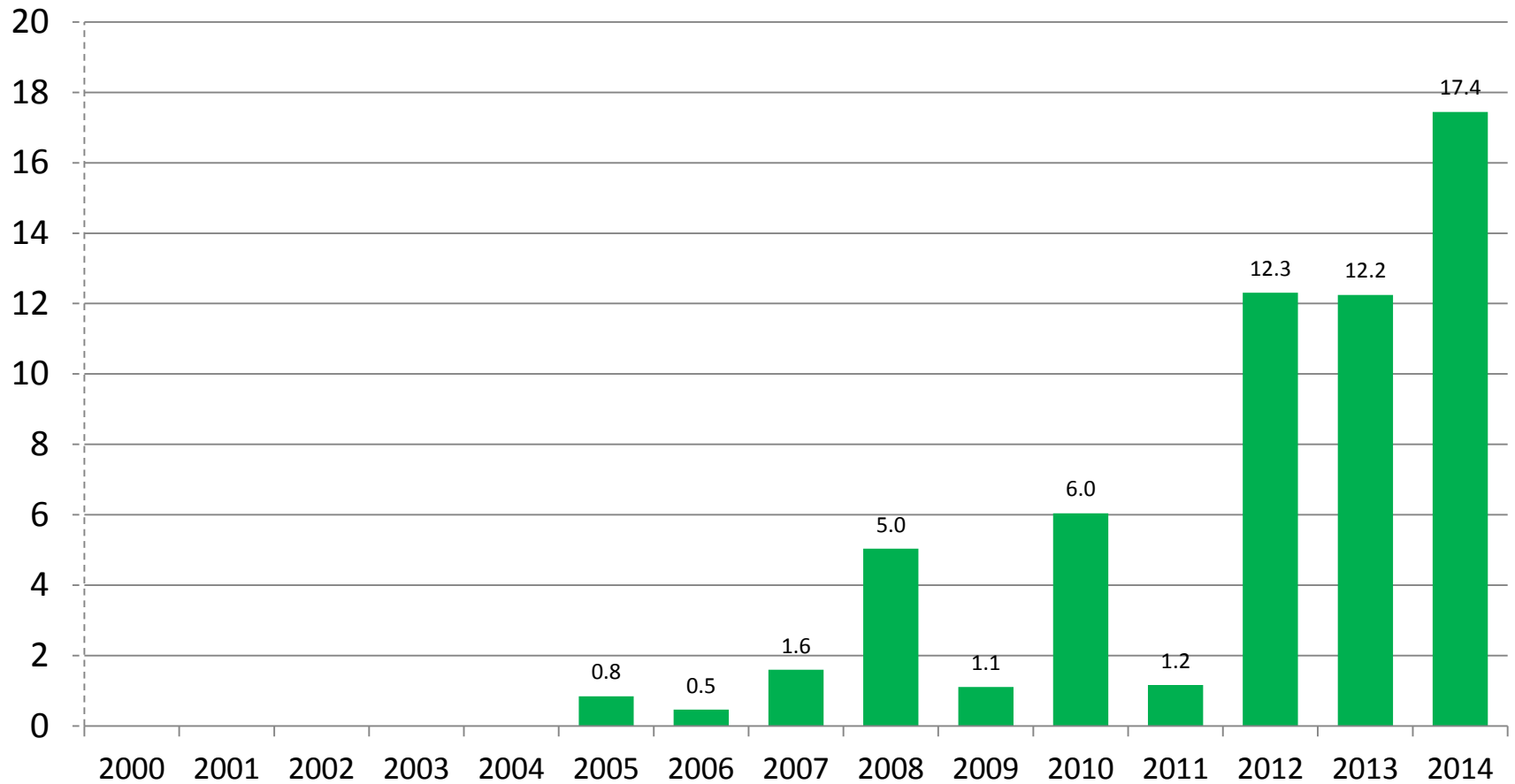
# Ireland – trend in the % of tramadol-related deaths (NDRDI vs ST6 selection D)



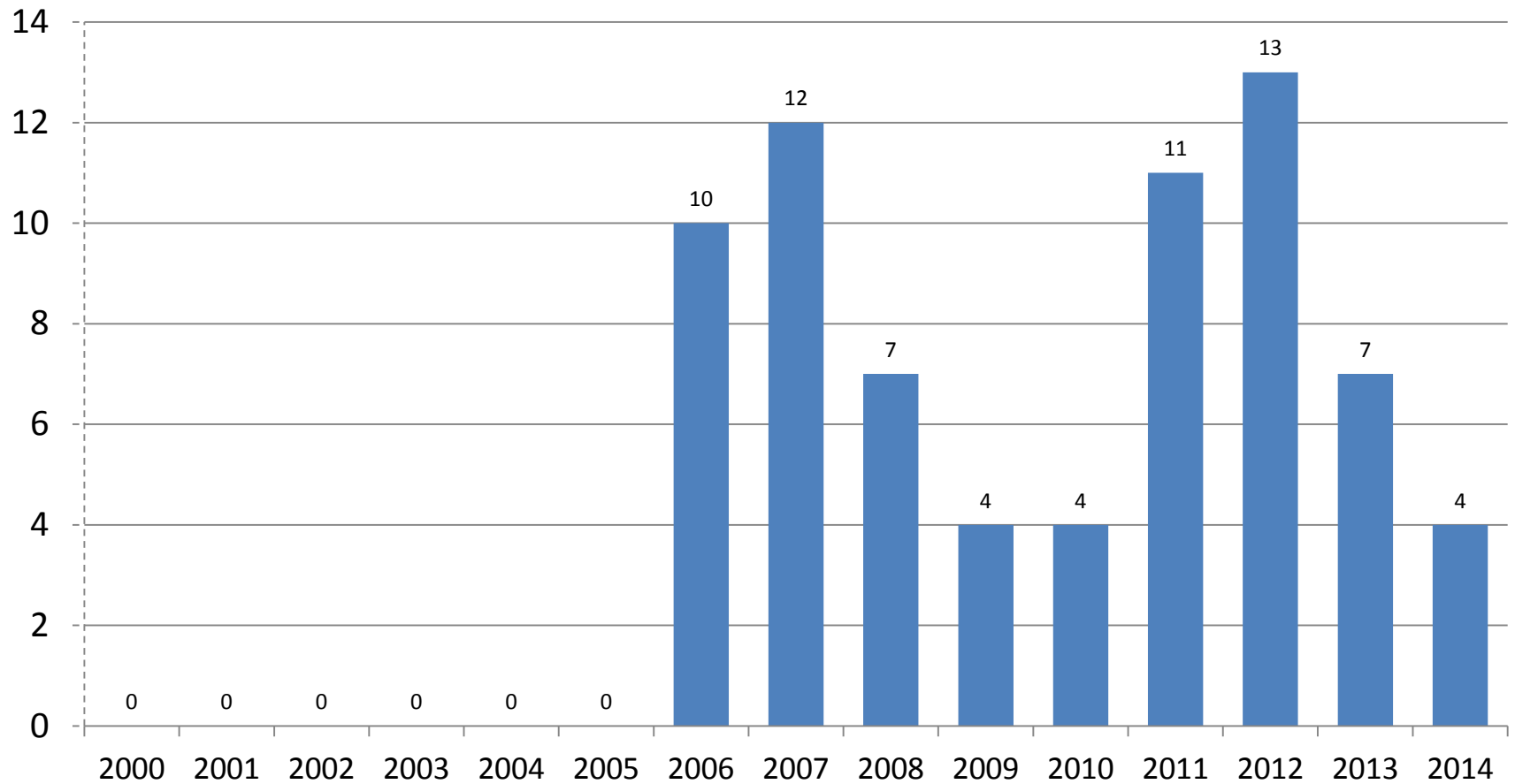
# Spain – trend in the number of tramadol-related deaths



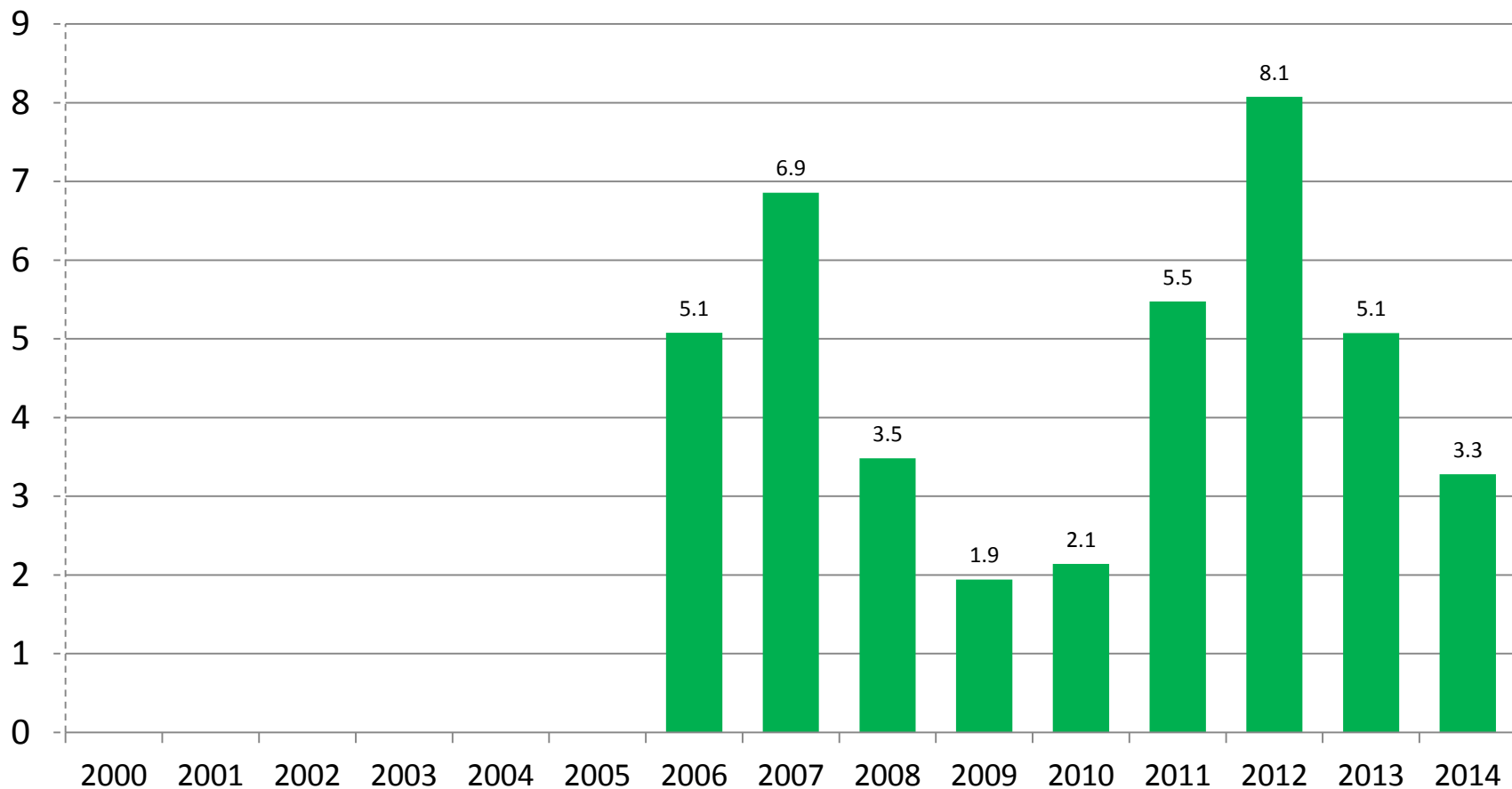
# Spain – trend in the % of tramadol-related deaths (selection D)



# Austria – trend in the number of tramadol-related deaths



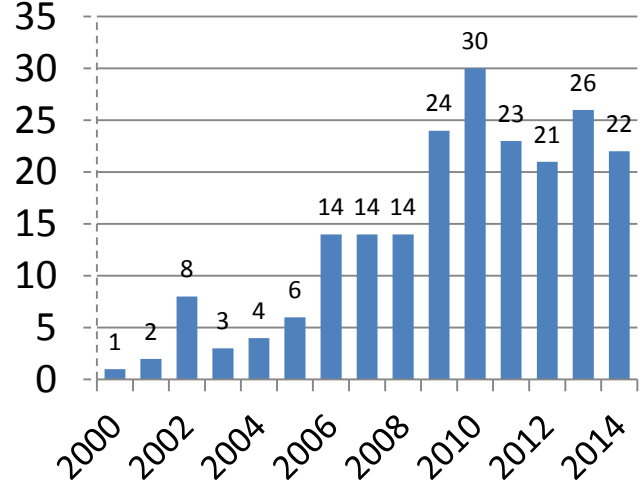
# Austria – trend in the % of tramadol-related deaths (selection D)



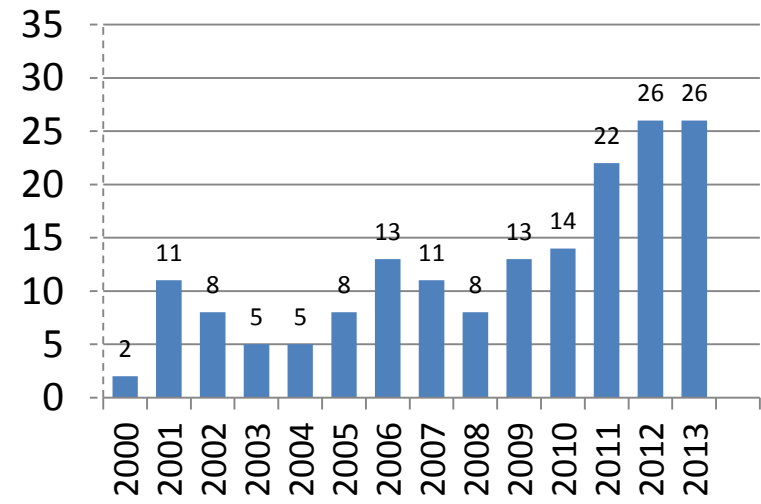


# Trends comparison in the numbers of tramadol-related deaths

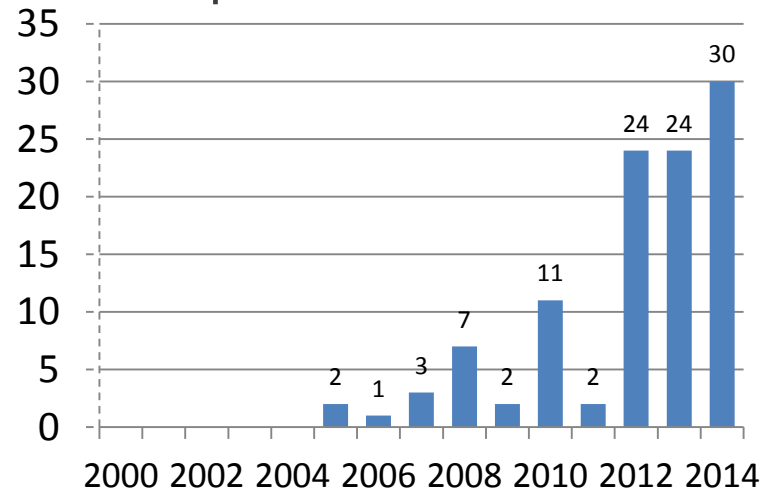
- Finland



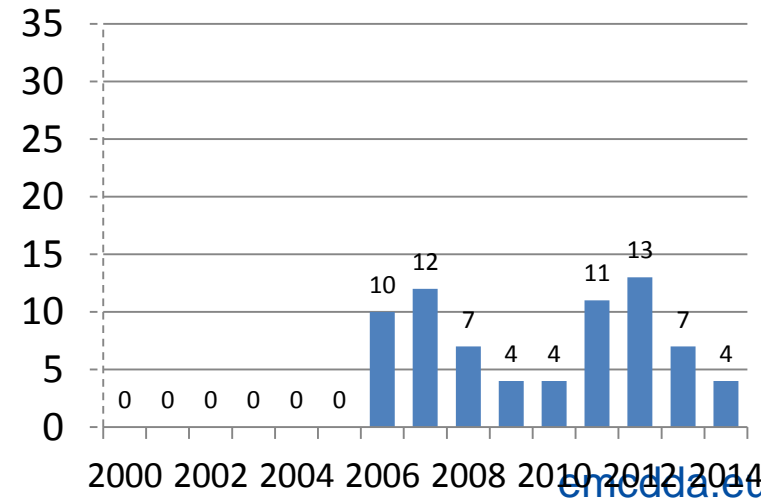
- Ireland



- Spain

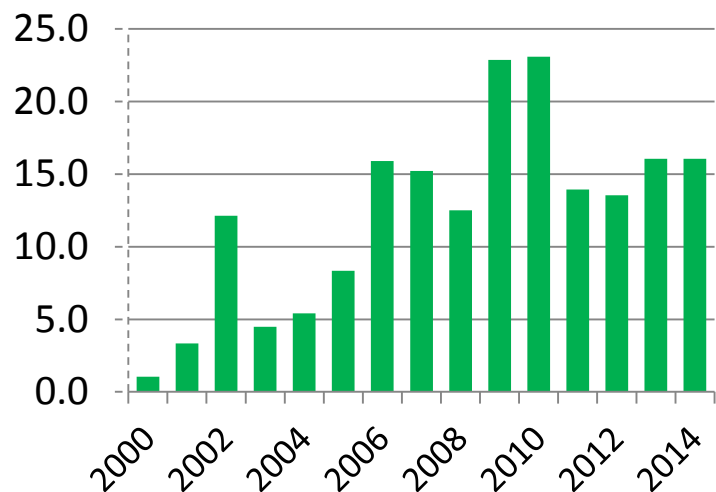


- Austria

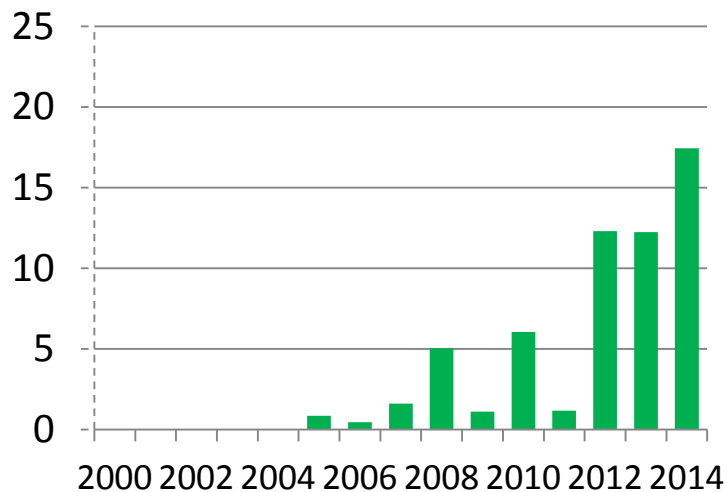


# Trends comparison in the numbers of tramadol-related deaths

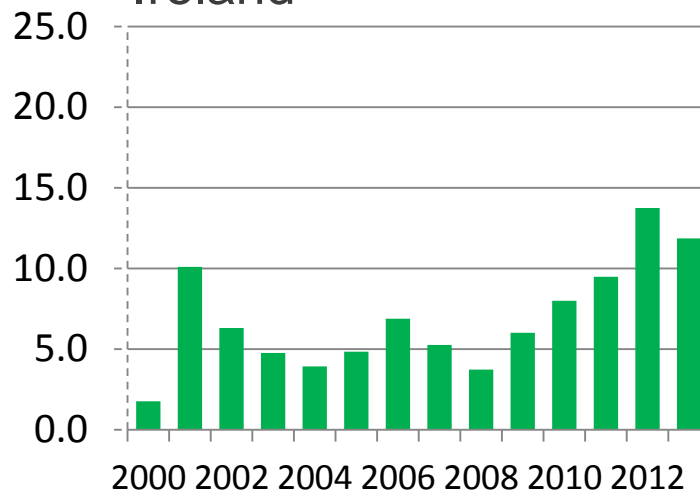
- Finland



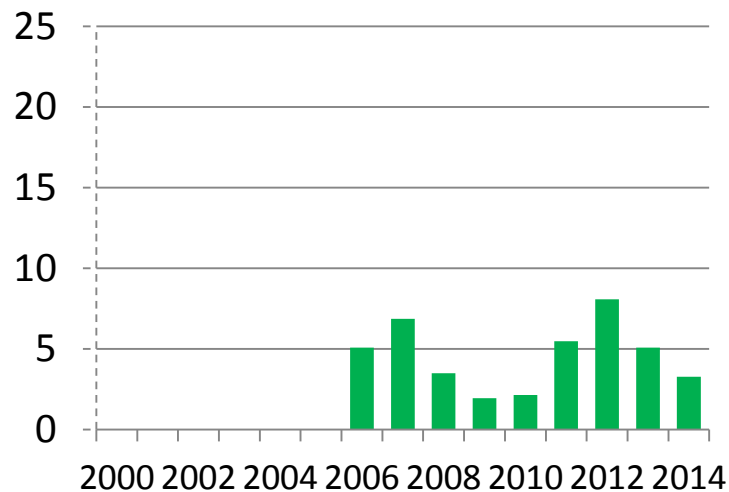
- Spain



- Ireland



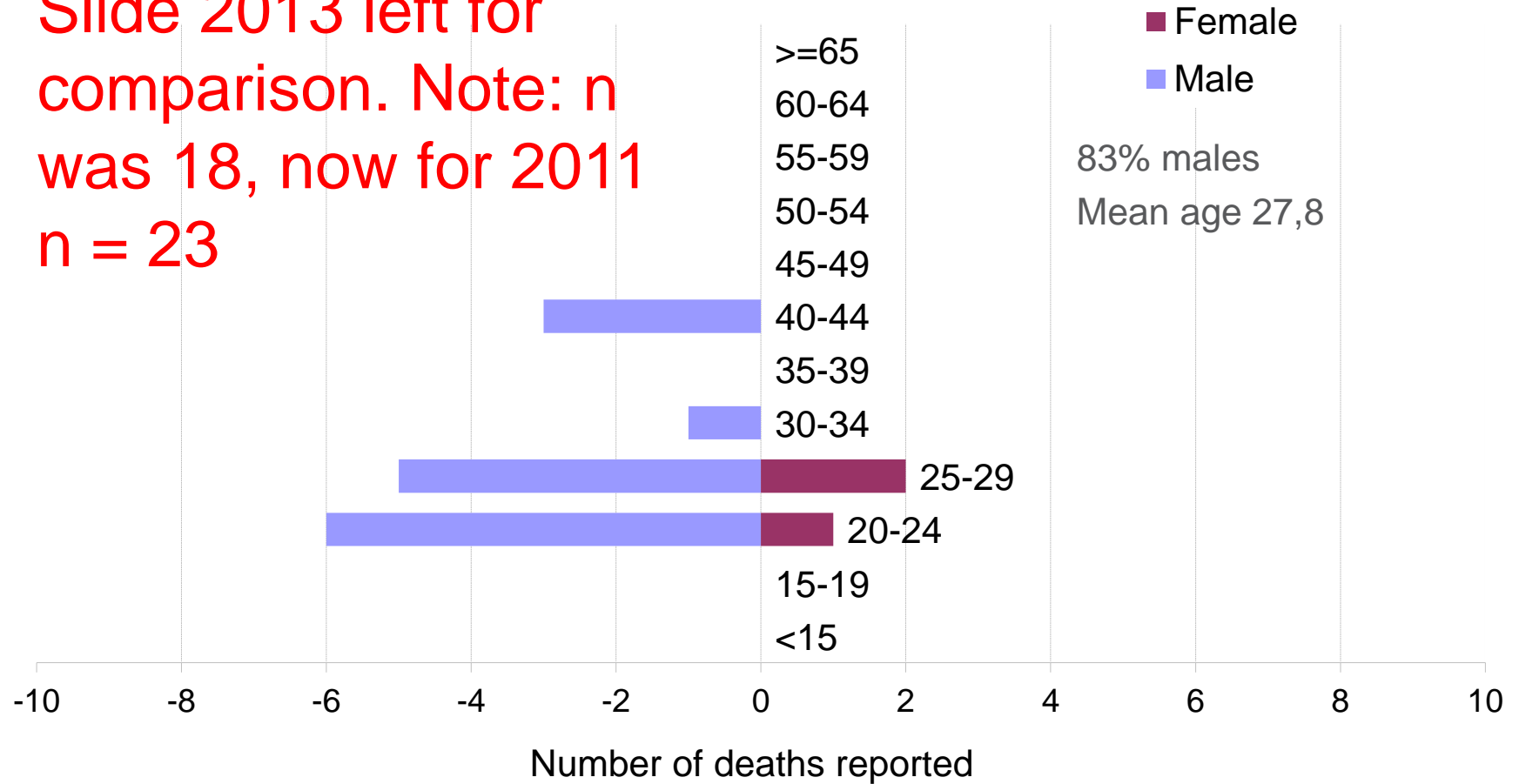
- Austria



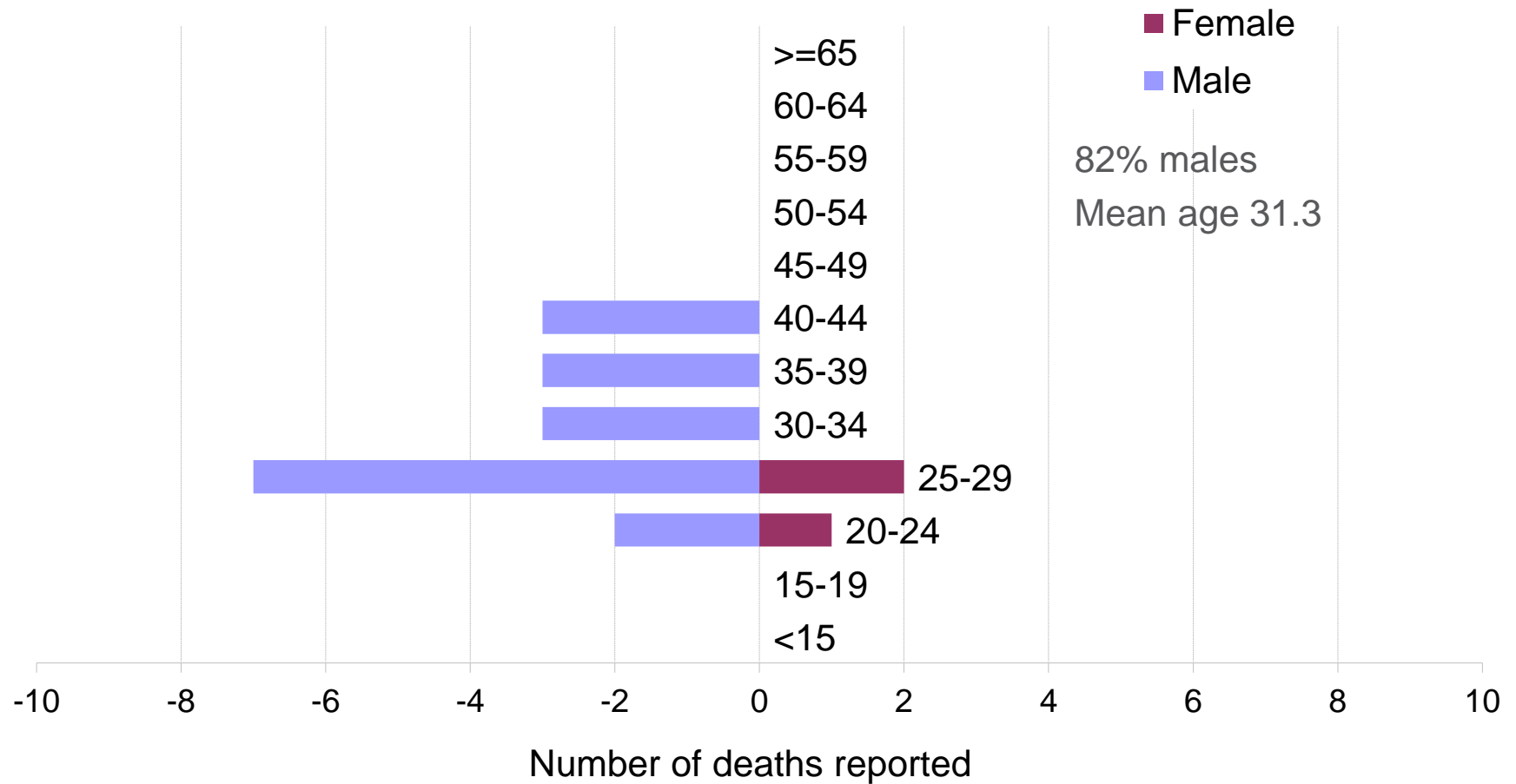
[emcdda.europa.eu](http://emcdda.europa.eu)

# Finland – age and gender profile of the tramadol-related deaths, 2011 (N=18)

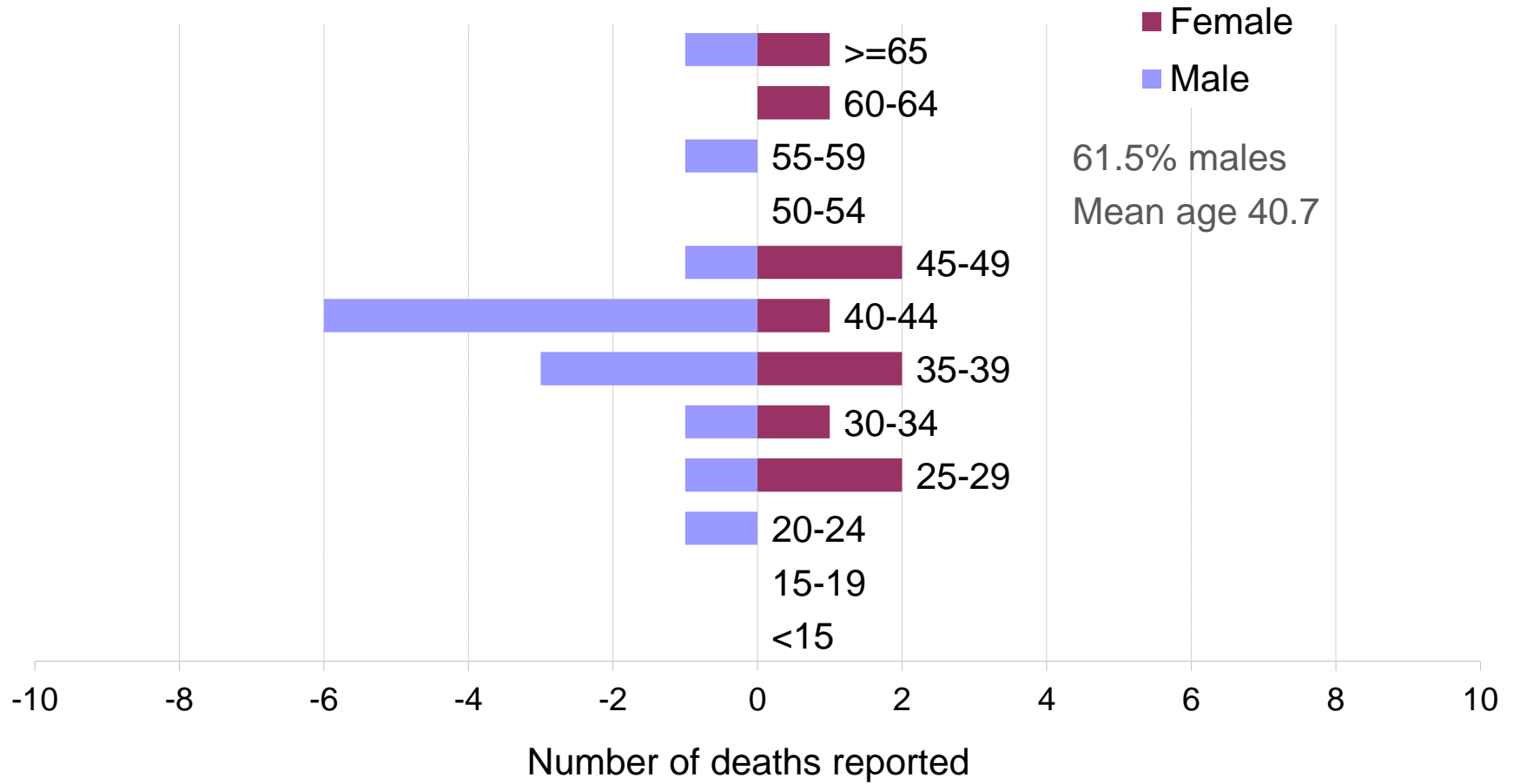
Slide 2013 left for comparison. Note: n was 18, now for 2011 n = 23



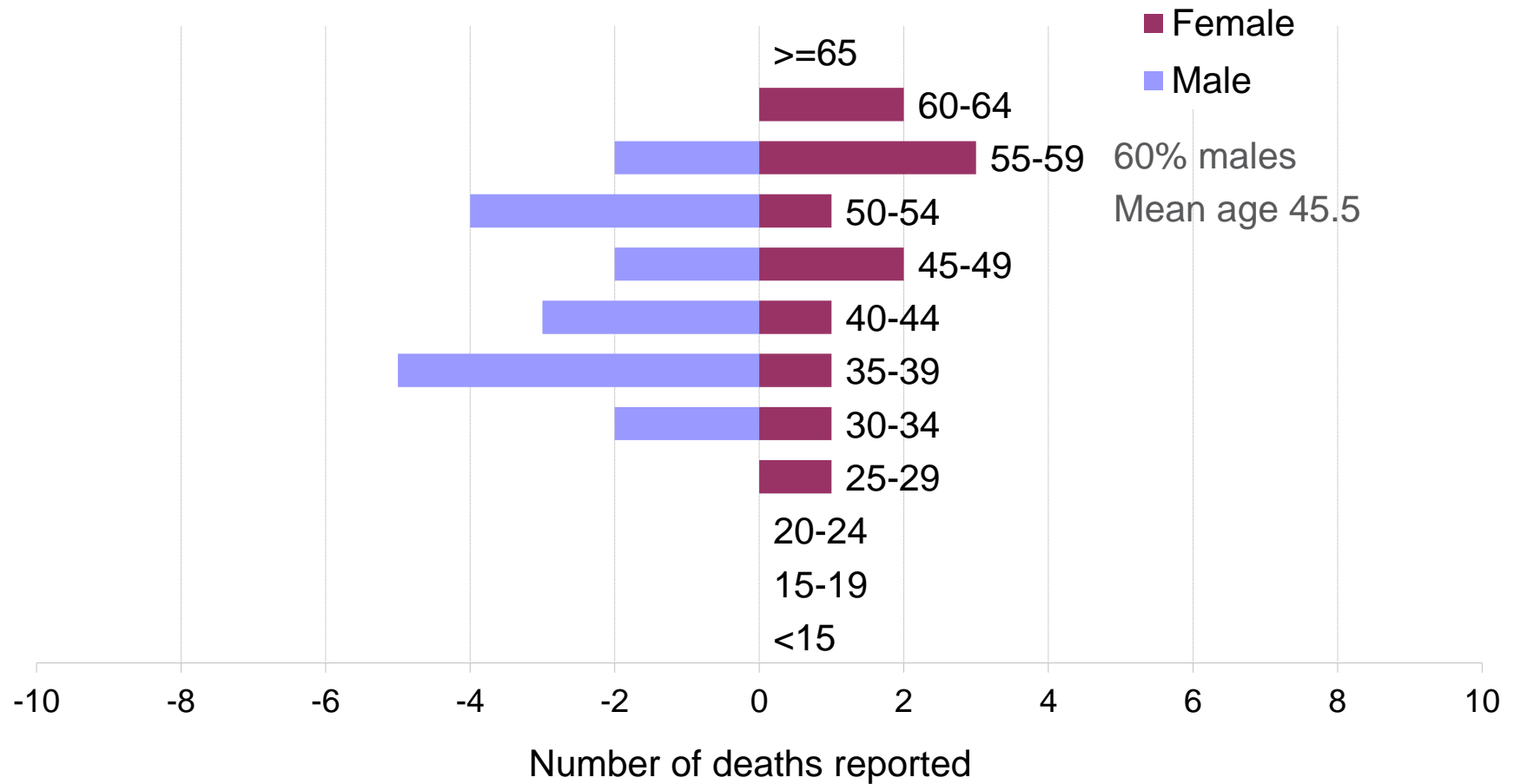
# Finland – age and gender profile of the tramadol-related deaths, 2014 (N=22)



# Ireland – age and gender profile of the tramadol-related deaths, 2014 NDRDI (N=26)



# Spain – age and gender profile of the tramadol-related deaths, 2014 (N=30)



# Changes in sales

- Increase in sales are reported by France, Ireland, Latvia
- Stable sales are reported in Finland, Lithuania, Hungary
- A reduction of 5% occurred in UK in 2015 after a pick in 2013 and 2014
- Caution: absolute numbers - do not take into account changes in the population

# Notes on regulations at a national level

- **Cyprus:** In 2002 Tramadol was included in the list of controlled substances. In **2003**, relevant regulations were issued; besides penalties for illegal trading, prescription rules were included, as well as a need of notification in case of addiction from the particular drug.
- **Latvia:** Despite the fact that there already were tramadol control actions (prescription to specific recipes, registration in the strict accountability register and inclusion of narcotic analgesics lists), changes in legislation were made in **2014**: tramadol was classified as psychotropic substance and it was included in the list of controlled substances.
- **Spain:** Tramadol is a legally commercialized pharmaceutical drug which requires medical prescription under the rules of the Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality. However, apparently, this opiate derivative can be “easily” purchased in the Internet bypassing the medical prescription requirement.



# Discussion & conclusions

- Limited information (short time series)
- Small number of cases
- Large countries and countries having issues with medicines-related harm are missing in this survey
- Different trends in different countries. Trend profiles similar both considering absolute numbers and percentages of cases among DRD
- Different age profiles of the tramadol-related deaths across countries
- Apparently no recent change in regulations / availability of tramadol (except in Latvia)
- Standard Table 5 – Toxicology reporting should be encouraged

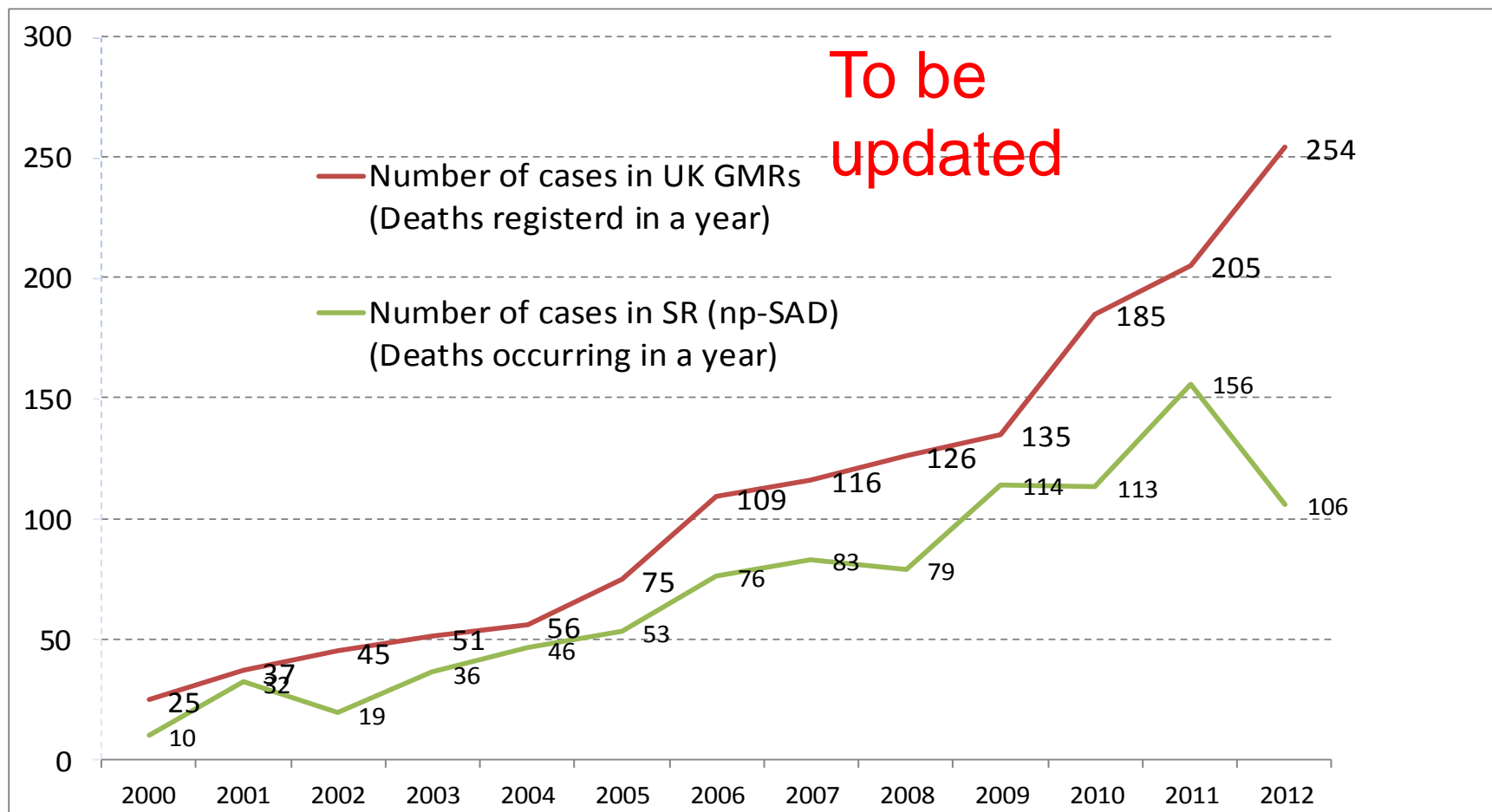
# Some comments

- Some updates of previously reported numbers
  - Finland now there were 24 cases in 2009 instead of 16, 30 in 2010 vs 27, 23 in 2011 vs 18, 21 in 2012 vs 18; I
  - Austria in 2008 now result 7 cases in 2008 instead of 5;
  - Latvia in 2012 now 0 instead of 2
  - Lithuania in 2012 now 0 instead of 1
- Ireland: data from NDRDI
- For some questionnaires, we may ask you some clarifications and tables filled in, where possible
- Some analyses limited to the countries with at least 10 cases

# Acknowledgements

- To the national experts and or focal points who contributed with data analysis and comments
- To João Matias who did the analysis of the previous survey

# United Kingdom – trends in the number of tramadol-related deaths



# United Kingdom – age and gender profile of the tramadol-related deaths, 2012 (n=110)

To be updated

