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TO SWALLOW CAMELS OR TO BE SWALLOWED . . ?

My personal experience as a pharmacist with the metamorphosis from being an independent pharmacy owner to become the daily leader of a chain pharmacy.

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March 1st, 2001, Norway got a new law concerning pharmacies that in a very short time led to greater changes than had ever been seen during Norway's 400 years of pharmacy. The most dramatic change concerned ownership of pharmacies. The new law requires only pharmaceutical leadership in pharmacies, not ownership. Pharmacies can now be owned by companies, not only by masters of pharmacy that had been the principle for more than 400 years.

After the new law of 2001, most Norwegian pharmacies are owned by three dominating pharmacy chains, each with their own wholesaler. Their share holders are international and are buying and selling at such speed that it is impossible to know exactly who are the owners at a given moment.

The total number of Norwegian pharmacies is by March 2009, 640. The number of totally independent, private pharmacies is at the same time 22.

The new law also opens for extensive generic substitution of medicine. After the new law of 2001 the amount of pharmacies in Norway has increased by 244, more than 60%.

How did those and other changes of Norwegian law and regulations influence me as a pharmacy owner, as a pharmacist and as a person?