

UNIVERSITY MENTAL HEALTH, NEUROSCIENCES & PRECISION MEDICINE RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE 'COSTAS STEFANIS' (UMHRI)  
Greek REITOX Focal Point of the EMCDDA



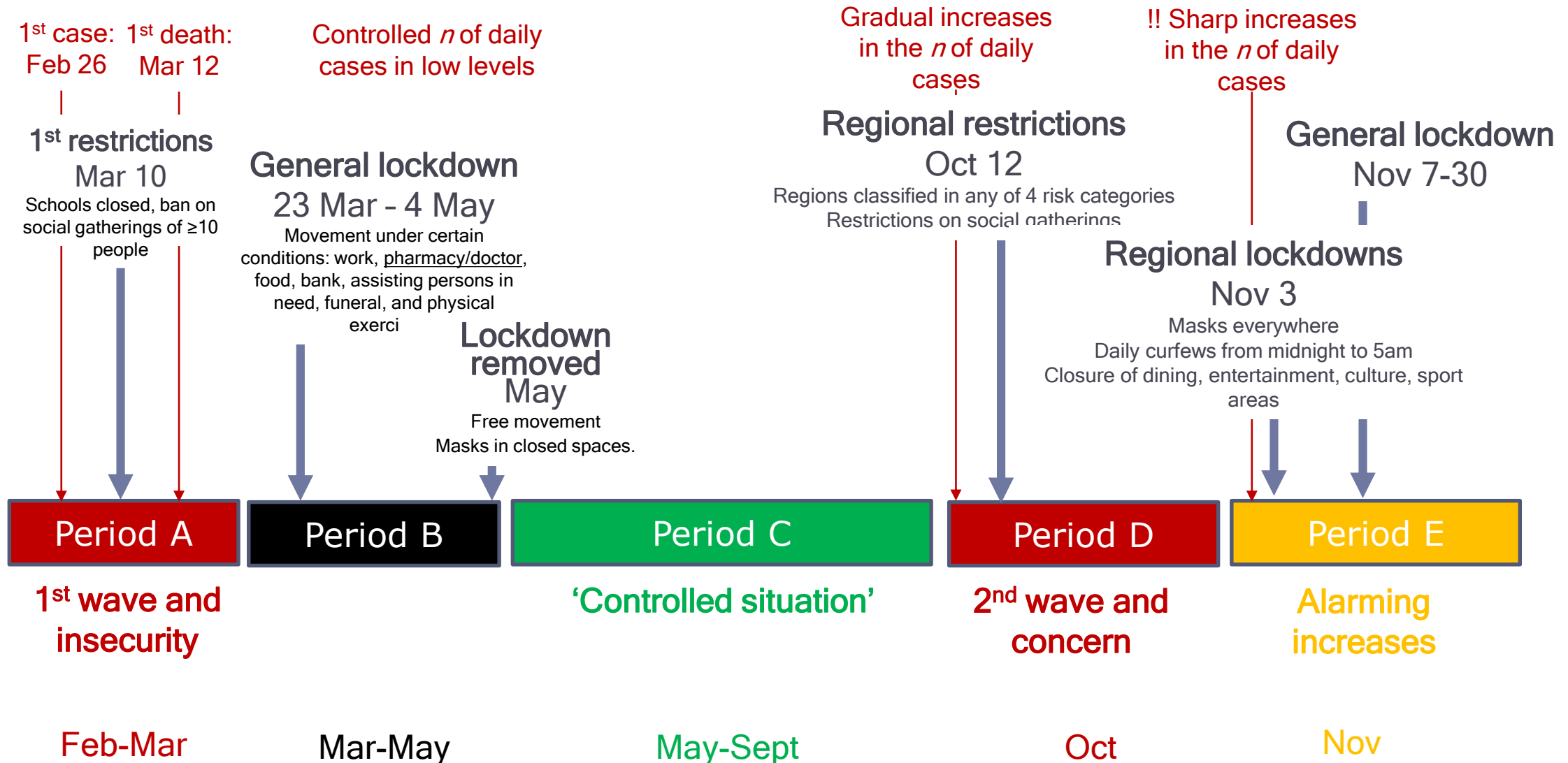
# Impact of covid-19 on drug services and clients GREECE - Focus on OST

Ioulia Bafi

# COVID-19 pandemic in Greece

GREECE, as of November 3

- Total cases: 44,246 (4,200 per 1M)
- Total deaths: 655 (63 per 1M)
- No death of high risk drug users due to Covid



## Impact on drug treatment/harm reduction services

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- ❑ Two new **shelters** were established (Athens, Thessaloniki) in order to respond to the needs of vulnerable people, including people who use drugs
- ❑ Increase in **street-work** activities in order to cover emerging basic needs of drug users (i.e. food and water) and raise awareness about the pandemic, its associated risks and the restrictions that apply
- ❑ **Psychosocial treatment programmes** continued their face-to-face services, while promoting alternative ways for the provision of support e.g., through telephone, and -where possible- replacement of face-to-face meetings with online sessions
- ❑ **Residential units** adapted their protocols for admission (e.g., providing testing services) to secure prevention of covid infection and spread in the community

## COVID-19 pandemic in Greece

# Impact on drug treatment services - OST

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### CHALLENGES

Threat for dislocation of OST units, staff reallocation

Need for limiting clients' movement

Pressure to cover increased needs of medications

Care for personnel and people in treatment

### ACTIONS TAKEN

Lobbying and strong reactions at organisational and personal levels

- Care for clients to be referred to the most convenient unit
- Increase in take-home doses and elasticity in previously stricter dispensation criteria

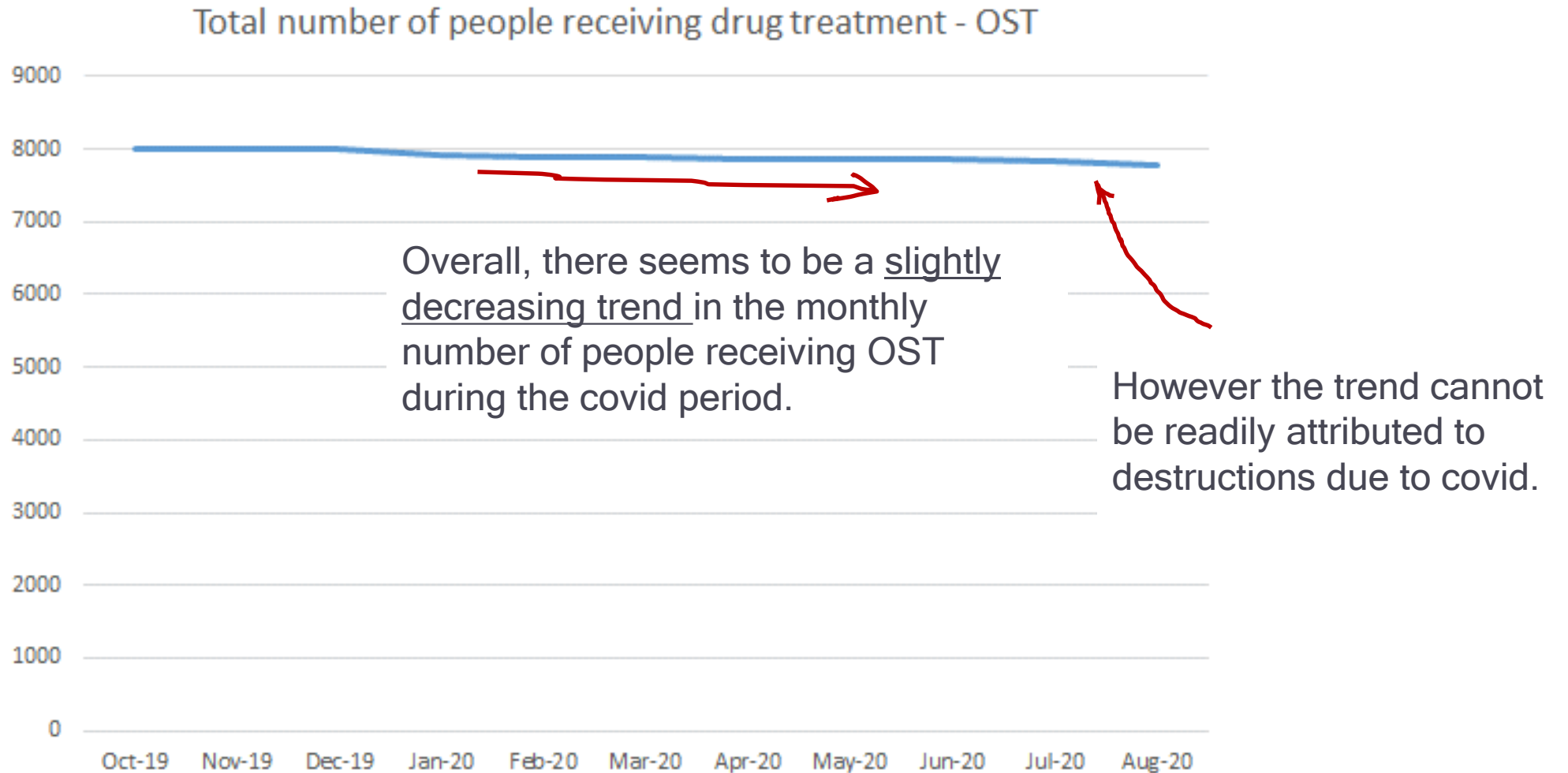
Actions at organisational level to ensure availability in OST medications

Provision of protective equipment, restrictions in the *n* of people in closed spaces, ventilation, etc.

### UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Increases in buprenorphine trafficking ??  
(expert opinion)

# Preliminary data on total number of people receiving OST



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# Thank you

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