

HEALTH SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

DEVELOPING PALLIATIVE CARE AT NATIONAL LEVEL - AN EXAMPLE FROM FINLAND

Minna Hökkä

*Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Wellbeing Services County of North Ostrobothnia,
Oulu, Finland,*

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Background: The need for palliative care (PC) is increasing due to the growing prevalence of chronic diseases and the ageing population. There is a clear need to ensure the provision of PC. To provide PC successfully, the necessary services should be integrated into the health care system. In addition, all healthcare professionals need to have sufficient competence to carry out their work successfully. To provide appropriate palliative care, we need care at different levels, integrated into primary health care, and specialist care for those patients and families with complex needs.

Methods and Objectives: In Finland, palliative care has been developed over the last eight years with national approaches. An expert group appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has surveyed the current situation and developed a service model. At the same time, the EduPal project, funded by the Ministry of Culture and Education, carried out research to define the necessary competencies and training for nurses and doctors. Based on the research and previous national recommendations, national curriculum recommendations were developed for the pre-registration education of nurses and doctors as well as for specialist education. Currently, the integration of palliative care services into health and social care services is being developed nationally in the FinPall project, funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Results: The systematic development that has taken place in Finland has changed the training of nurses and doctors. It has also influenced access to palliative care services for patients and families. The development has been guided by research carried out during the various multidisciplinary development processes.

Conclusions: Development guided by research can change the existing health-care systems and the education of professionals.

Keywords: Palliative care, development, health care services, education, research