

## IMPROVING PAIN MANAGEMENT IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SETTINGS IN ORDER TO PREVENT WORK DISABILITY

### **Background and aims**

Helsinki City Occupational Health Centre provides occupational health (OH) services to the almost 40,000 employees working in the city departments. Every year, pain and pain-related diseases cause hundreds of thousands of sickness absence days among city employees. Additionally, the majority of work disability pensions are related to pain.

'Pain and Work Disability' is a newly developed project with the aim of systematically improving pain management in OH settings in order to reduce work disability.

### **Methods**

The project includes following modules: enhancing the use of comprehensive pain management tools (particularly non-pharmacological); screening systematically "yellow flags" to detect high risk disability cases; finding alternatives for full-time sick leave (fit note, part-time sick leave etc.); creating common guidelines for sick leave prescribing; providing direct access to physiotherapist (self-referral); enhancing the use of cognitive functional therapy among physiotherapists; educating upper management, supervisors and employees; launching pain management groups etc.

Various outcome measurements will be used, including surveys, number of consultations, sickness absence data, disability pensions etc.

### **Results**

The planning and development of the project has started in January 2015 and the project will continue the following 2-3 years. I will present the project in more detail hopefully with some preliminary results in EFIC congress in September 2015.

### **Conclusions**

More comprehensive and systematic pain management tools are needed to better manage the massive burden of work disability related to pain and chronic pain in particular. At least in Finland, OH plays a key role in this shift of paradigm.

Author and presenter:

Helena Miranda, MD, Dr.Med.Sc., MSc., project coordinator

E-mail: [helena.miranda@jippii.fi](mailto:helena.miranda@jippii.fi)

Home address: Itämerenkatu 2 a 5

00180 Helsinki Finland

Tel. +358 400 219 250

Workplace: Helsinki City Occupational Health Center, Finland