

The ICN NP/APN Network Conference 2024

Title: Advanced Practice Nursing development in Finland

Authors: Krista Jokiniemi, Docent, PhD, University Lecturer, University of Eastern Finland; Anna Suutarla, Finnish Nurses Association, senior advisor; Anna Axelin, University of Turku, assistant professor; Mervi Flinkman, The Union of Health and Social Care Professionals in Finland (Tehy), labour policy expert; Sini Hämäläinen, LAB University of Applied Sciences, lecturer; Tuija Lehtikunnas, Turku University Hospital, hospital nurse; Virpi Sulosaari, Turku University of Applied Sciences, senior lecturer; Annukka Tuomikoski, Wellbeing Services County of North Ostrobothnia, senior nurse practitioner.

Background

Advanced practice nursing (APN) roles have been developed during the past two decades in Finland. The two best-known job titles are clinical nurse specialist (CNS) and nurse practitioner (NP). The Finnish Nurses Association (FNA) set up an expert working group for the first time in 2013 to describe the APN situation in Finland. Now, nearly a decade later, this work has been updated, and recommendations have been released to go forward with the role implementation in the coming years.

Aims

The purpose of this evidence-informed policy update process was to re-visit the current APN situation in Finnish social and healthcare.

Method

The evidence-informed policy and practice pathway framework was utilized. Multiple methods such as a scoping review of literature, interviews of key informants, and expert group round-table discussions were conducted between 2021 and 2022.

Results

There have been some positive developments in the APN role implementation during past years. However, there is still variation at the national level regarding titles, education, and work descriptions. Furthermore, only little effectiveness research has been conducted. Based on FNA expert panel work the recommendations for the APN roles during the coming years include harmonization of the titles and roles, development of education, adaptation of legislation, and evaluation of role outcomes. Close collaboration between the education system, working life, and regulation is a requirement in role development. Finally, organizations need to produce and analyze data to evaluate the effectiveness of APN roles.

Conclusion

The introduction of the APN job description requires close collaboration between different actors. The development of job descriptions and fully implemented roles requires political, organizational, and managerial support, continuous evaluation, as well as good cooperation between nurses.