

Multi-professional teamwork in Finnish health and social service centers, experiences of managers

INTRODUCTION

Health and social service centers are developed for the first contact points of primary care and primary social services in Finland. Long waiting times, shortage of staff and lack of coordination have been major problems in primary care. As a solution, multi-professional teams and better collaboration between professionals have been developed. This study explores, how the teams function and what challenges they have in the point of view of managers.

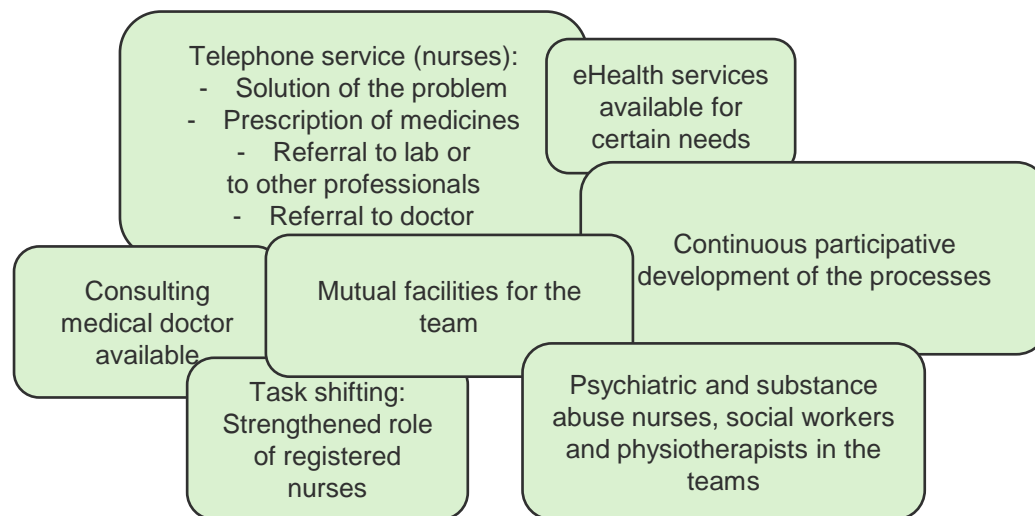
METHODS

The study is based on 16 interviews (25 managers) in 5 health and social services centers in one county in Finland. The managers were asked about work organization, their experiences of the team model and about well-being of employees. The interviews were analyzed using content analysis.

RESULTS

- The service process begins in telephone: either nurse can solve the problem of client in phone or refers to lab or doctor or other professional
- Easy consultation of medical doctors a key element in the strengthened role of nurses
- If doctor's appointment needed lab results already ready
- Easy access to or consultation of other professionals important
- A difference between teams: emphasis on segmentation of clients or on care continuity

Key elements of effective multi-professional services in health and social service centers, an example



CONCLUSIONS

- In managers views multi-professional teamwork is functioning rather well, but the processes need continuous development.
- Multi-professional work can streamline and improve the treatment process, but eHealth, task shifting, and telephone service need to be streamlined, too.
- Clear processes and knowing the work roles of different professionals could help integrating new professionals into the teams.
- Segmentation of different clients into separate teams may improve service process but may also increase stress levels between teams.
- The risk of teamwork may be decreased care continuity if clients have no personal nurse or doctor.