

A Northern Insight – The Future of Occupational Health Services and the Role of Occupational Health Nursing in Finland

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Introduction: The Global OH Service development started in 1950's when WHO and ILO formulated a definition of Occupational Health Services and described the fundamental points. The later agreed European Framework Directive doesn't provide obligations to arrange OH Services and the national legislations still defines the obligations despite the consensus.

Finland is a forerunner with separate legislation for OH Services since 1978 and later 2001, which obligates employers to arrange OH. The coverage of OH Services varies greatly in many countries, in Finland it is 92 %. The current number of OHNs in Finland is 2000. Occupational Health2025 – A Strategic Guideline was recently published in Finland. The future challenges of OH services are supporting work ability and work disability prevention. There still is a great need for OH Services development despite progress, also in Finland.

Methods: Literature Analysis, FAOHN Member Survey 2016

Results: The first Finnish OH Act was set in 1978 obligating to arrange preventive OH services to all employees and many new OHNs were recruited to OH units. The OH Decree was set in 1990's to improve the quality of OH and the maintenance of work ability became a focus. The OH legislation was renewed in 2001 and OH Services were redefined to cooperation; starting by defining the OH needs based on risk assessment and work place survey and planning the actions. The recent Finnish OH research and follow-up data from Kela shows that OHNs have bigger role in OH cooperation than earlier. Most of the workplace surveys, health surveillances and action planning hours are done by the OH Nurses. The recently published strategic guideline, OH2025 contains three main objectives: 100% coverage of OH services, OH services for small enterprises and digital OH services. The FAOHN Survey 2016 for OHNs showed a large increase in OHNs' work demands; result and productivity demands.

Conclusion: The OH paradigm is developed from curative to preventive. The role of OHNs is crucial producing cost-effective services for small enterprises. The future OH challenges in Finland are supporting workers work ability and work disability prevention. The number of educated OHNs is decreasing in Finland and the resources are challenged.

Keywords: OH Services development, Future OH services, OH Nursing