



City of Helsinki

Department of Social Services and Health Care

Collaboration within schools: the role of Finnish school doctors



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Municipal health care in Helsinki

- City of 625 000 inhabitants
- Social Services and Health Care united →
 - 15 000 employees
 - € 2.1 billion /year
 - 25 health centers
- School and student health care:
 - 100 000 pupils and students
 - 246 schools/ colleges, >200 addresses for school health care
 - 125 school health nurses
- **25+1 vacancies for full –time school doctors**



What is a school doctor for in Finland?

- Expectations towards a school doctor:
 - Families and school personnel: a physician to be consulted
 - Employer & the Finnish law: health check-ups

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Government gave detailed instructions for health check-ups 2011

- A mandatory check up by a nurse every year
- A mandatory "extensive" health check-up by a nurse AND a doctor
3 times during the 9 year comprehensive school
- One meeting with a doctor on the secondary level

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An extensive health check up



- Preceding
 - Questionnaire for the pupil
 - Questionnaire for the parent
 - Questionnaire for the teacher, if allowed by the parents
- Interview & physical screenings of the child by a nurse
- Meeting with the physician (30minutes)
 - A least one parent should be present



Meeting with the physician (30minutes)

- The information gathered by the questionnaires and the nurse
- A least one parent should be present
- A full picture of the whole family:
 - Physical health, growth and development
 - Psycosocial health & development
 - Parental & the child's own concerns
 - Concerns raised by the school professionals
 - Risks for the healthy future
- Recording the comprehensive history, status, summary & plans
- In theory, 10 check -ups during a day





Should school doctors do anything else but check ups?



- **Employer:** no.
 - School doctors should stick to preventive health care and perform 10 check ups /day.
- **Doctors:** yes!
 - It is unethical not to tackle the problems detected in the check ups
 - Questionable to refer everyone to secondary care
 - Consultations of the school nurse and other school professionals



School and student care in Finland

- Include
 - School health nurse
 - responsible for 600 pupils, 1-3 schools
 - School doctor
 - responsible for 2100-5000 pupils
 - AND (dep. of education)
 - psychologist,
 - social worker,
 - special education teacher



Theory does not equal practice

- **10 check-ups/day seldom possible** because
 - Immigrants and a need for interpretation
 - A lot of kids with special needs
 - No-shows common
 - Information technology problems common
 - A lot of interruptions by the pupils
 - Variety of concerns by the parents
- Acute somatic and psychosocial crises
 - extensive check -up success rate ~70%
 - Stressful situation for the nurses
 - Frustration of the doctors





Brainstorming



9 colleagues discussed in a group >
draft

> all school doctors

> approval of the bosses

> Distribution to collaborators



Brainstorming (1): what does a school doctor do?

1. Health check- ups:
 - a) Mandatory extensive health check-ups
 - b) Mandatory check-ups in colleges
 - c) Individual needs : immigrants, pupils in special education
2. Control visits
3. Consultations to the nurse and school personnel
4. Multi-professional co-working
5. Other tasks: first aid, lecturing etc.



Brainstorming (2): what do we prioritize?

- 1. Multi-professional co-working**
2. Health check-ups:
 - a) Individual needs
 - b) Mandatory broad check ups
 - c) Mandatory check ups in colleges
3. Control visits
4. Consultations to the nurse and school personnel
5. Other tasks: first aid, lecturing etc.



Brainstorming (2): what do we prioritize?

1. Multi-professional co-working
2. Health check-ups:
 - a) **Individual needs**
 - b) Mandatory broad check ups
 - c) Mandatory check ups in colleges
3. Control visits
4. Consultations to the nurse and school personnel
5. Other tasks: first aid, lecturing etc.



Brainstorming (3): The nurses are told to

- book only 8 visits in advance > last two visits a week before
- book 60 minutes for psychosocial problems and immigrants
- book 60-90 minutes for multi-professional negotiations
- guide the somatic concerns to health center, except for
 - growth and pubertal concerns
 - weight concerns
 - suspicion of scoliosis



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Brainstorming (4): division of work between school health care and health station



- Psychological and psychosocial matters are dealt in both places
- Growth, puberty, weight gain and loss and suspected scoliosis: primarily handled by the school doctor
- Long term illnesses: periodic examinations make sure that treatment and follow-up are proceeding as planned.
- Acne, stomach problems, headache, bed-wetting, allergies etc:if revealed during health examination, the doctor provides preliminary treatment > directs health station
- Cold, cough, asthma diagnostics and follow up at a health station



Just a beginning...

- Lessens the pressure on individual doctors and nurses?
- Encourages the student welfare personnel to consult and call for meetings?
- Equality among citizens?
- Equality among schools?

