

How to ensure informatics skills and competencies in the transformation of social and health care?

Digitalization and the consequent changes in the structures and functions of social and health services require professionals in the social and health care sector to acquire new skills and to strengthen their former skills. Different social and health care professionals must have adequate informatics skills and competencies, including information and communication technologies, to enable them to play in different roles in social and health care and its evolving network. For example, instructing a patient to use digital services requires new expertise from nursing staff, which according to a recent study is insufficient. Informatics has not been included in vocational curricula for a large part of social and health care professionals. Thus, attention must be paid to the development of informatics skills and competencies in the workplace and at different levels of education.

Social and health care professionals are offered education and training courses of various degrees in social and health informatics, development and management of electronic health and well-being services, and health and well-being technologies at universities and universities of applied sciences. The training courses range from basic IT skills to universities of applied sciences master's and universities master's programs and to postgraduate studies. The Master's Degree Programs in the Finnish universities are the Master's Degree Program in Health and Human Service Informatics at the University of Eastern Finland, Biomedical Engineering at the Oulu University, Digital Health and Life Sciences and Future Health and Technology at the University of Turku, Biomedical Imaging at the Åbo Akademi University, Biomedical Technology at the Tampere University and Life Science Informatics at the Helsinki University and Aalto University. The Master's Degree Program in Health and Human Service Informatics at the University of Eastern Finland is based on the International Medical Information Association (IMIA) recommendations of the informatics education. The master's program has been accredited in 2012 and 2018. European Federation of Medical Informatics Association (EFMI) has collected biomedical educational programmes on the website <http://bmhi-edu.org/>.

Doctors and dentists have the opportunity of acquiring a professional special competence for healthcare information technology (eHealth). The special competence requires two years full time service and theoretical studies after a qualified medical specialist consultant status. The new competence gives them the ability to utilize their knowledge about health care processes for the benefit of the new eHealth and mHealth services. Those graduated have found positions as leading healthcare information technology experts or in administrative tasks in regional or national eHealth and mHealth projects.

Nursing specialty certificate in Nursing Informatics (NI) has been available for members of the Finnish Nurses Association (FNA). The applicant must be a RN and a member of FNA. The evaluation is based on a portfolio which the applicant must draw up as a proof of accomplishments in her/his post-degree career in three categories: work experience, formal education and cooperation and developmental activities relating nursing informatics specialty. Persons who have this certificate work in responsible and diverse informatics tasks in their own organizations and as experts in various local and national development projects and working groups.

There will be a panel discussion on the topic "How to ensure informatics skills and competencies in the transformation of social and health care?" during the Social and Health Informatics Research Days. The primary purpose of the panel is to share information about different actors in informatics education on national level and its strengths as well as highlight potential challenges in the future and potential problems, risks or opportunities. Solutions to these will be discussed with the panel and public. One of the objectives of the panel discussion is also to consider how the Social and Health Informatics Association can participate and influence the maintenance of the high level of informatics training in Finnish social and health care.

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