

Starting Shot!

Dear reader, right now you are a witness to the birth of the Finnish Journal of eHealth and eWelfare! Health and social related issues are becoming any more information intensive or "e"-issues. They are increasingly included in the range of activities of the Finnish Social and Health Information Association and the Finnish Society of Telemedicine and eHealth. Further information will be created, stored and integrated with new information, delivered, revised - and hopefully rejected, too. The idea of a developed society is based on services. Without information there are no services and without information there are no eServices.

The growing aged population need more services. Health and social sectors have to compete for resources with other societal needs. The claim of Thwaites that the annual increase of needs is growing by 5% whereas that of resources by 2.5% seems to underline this. Because economic growth is becoming slower, there is not enough money to solve the problem. Even in the case that there were enough money, we face the hampering shortage of employees in health and social sectors.

Although we cannot put more money or employees into service production, we can increase productivity. It means the development of new action plans, working processes and infrastructures. For information intensive fields of activities such as health and social welfare this signifies a demand for information and communication technology. In the strategic outlines of EU member countries for providing health and social services a lot of expectation has been placed on information and communication technology. That is why it is the only resource which still has the potential to grow.

Information and communication technology is not, however, an end in itself. It is only a tool to achieve the goal. In order to be beneficial and effective the tool presumes collaboration between representatives of technology and its users for planning, developing, implementing and assessing. The collaboration presumes an interaction and interaction is a platform for that. This is the point of FinJeHeW.

As a special journal for information management for health and social welfare FinJeHeW wants to offer to readers and writers a platform which contains interesting and updated information, scientific articles, news, announcements, points of views, discussions and, in addition to that, also the promotion of enterprises of the branch. In order to produce all of that we call the members of the Finnish Social and Health Information Association and the Finnish Society of Telemedicine and eHealth and all other interested persons. That is why this first issue is open access. For the future the access is only for the members of the associations or by a charge for the first three months and free after that.

This first issue aims to be the first step on the long and challenging path towards an outstanding international scientific publication. In addition to that, the web journal must not be only the counterpart of a paper based journal but it must exploit the new potentials of electronic environment, too. However, the success of FinJeHeW depends above all on the content. For that the members of the associations and other experts have the key position. Can we develop FinJeHeW to achieve the goal? Like Obama, let's say: yes, we can!

Ilkka Winblad, Editor-in-Chief