

Changes in the population, changes in distress - challenges for Finnish health care

Person in charge: Docent, academy senior fellow Marja-Liisa Honkasalo

The aims of our interdisciplinary research are three-fold. In brief, our aims are to study

- 1) how certain changes in Finland's demographic structure and other crucial changes in society are influencing the relationship between the individual and the welfare system, especially in terms of morality,
- 2) how the expectations and experiences of certain population groups with regards to the Finnish health care system are constructed and
- 3) how professional, biomedically-based knowledge and practical competence are constituted in order to meet the new challenges.

Theoretical and empirical background:

We will study both 1) the expectations and experiences of the customers/patients involved, and 2) how health care professionals in an institutional setting face the challenges. Our research design is based on four themes of social change concerning 1) immigrants, 2) ageing 3) changing lifestyles, 4) illness panorama and the (bio)medical ways of defining populations and illnesses. We will study these themes through four different case studies.

The research project will contribute to the development of health care services and health care services research e.g. in the following areas: new understanding of morally and ethically sound service delivery and new theoretical and methodological competence, especially with regards to methods that take into account the voices of the "weak consumers" of the health care services.

Sub-projects:

Mulki Mölsä, M.D.: Mental health problems among the elderly immigrants in Finland (a Ph.D. study in public health)

Marja Tiilikainen, Ph.D. : Somali families in the context of transnational health care (post-doc studying comparative religion and medical anthropology)

Anna Leppo MA: Health care services and antenatal substance abuse in Finland and Scotland (a Ph.D. study in sociology)

Annika Lillrank Ph.D. Chronic pain sufferers in social interaction with health care. (a post doc study in health policy)

Juha Soivio MA: Finnish health professionals and the challenge of coronary heart disease (a post doc study in medical anthropology)

Participating researchers:

PhD Annika Lillrank

PhD Marja Tiilikainen

Anna Leppo, PhD student

Mulki Mölsä, PhD student

Research sites:

The Department of Sociology, University of Helsinki and Departments of Public Health, Comparative Religion, Social Policy and Cultural Anthropology, University of Helsinki

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