
POSTER ABSTRACT**Interdisciplinary education and research as a basis for the integration of social and health care**19th International Conference on Integrated Care, San Sebastian, 01-03 April 2019

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Introduction: The renovation of the Finnish social and health care system has been ongoing for years. The need for this reform arose from the question how to ensure equal and adequate social and health care services under the existing municipality-based system. The aim is to create financially more sustainable bodies for service organisers, and to achieve comprehensive integration of social and health care services.

High quality patient-centered care can only be ensured through dialogic interactions between disciplines and professions. Universities have a crucial role as an educator of both professionally and interprofessionally competent experts as well as in carrying out interdisciplinary research to the needs of renewing social and health care system and its evaluation.

Objectives: To meet these needs, the University of Turku has established a new interdisciplinary platform, the Centre for Education and Research on Social and Health Services (SHS Education and Research Centre) that brings together all seven faculties and their stakeholders to close co-operation around the multiform questions of integrative social and health care system. The SHS Education and Research Centre aims to promote and produce interdisciplinary higher education, research and societal interaction.

Outcomes: One year after its establishment, the Centre has made significant progress with all its three main fields. First, we have created and launched a multidisciplinary study program, Basics of the New Social and Health Care System (25 ECTS). It includes seven courses provided by all faculties of the University. The main aim is to increase students' understanding related to the social and health care services reform, its background, and future needs and challenges. In addition to the social and health sector's viewpoint, the study program provides, e.g. legal, economic, educational and cultural aspects to the developing of client-centered service system and its integration. Second, we have launched interdisciplinary forums for researchers and experts from working life. These forums focus on services for children and evaluative research supporting the national reform of the service system. Finally, we have reached the status of an influential interdisciplinary academic operator by determinedly building societal interaction. Our experts are widely involved in the renovation of the social and health care system and the developing of higher education on both regional and national levels.

Sustainability and transferability: Interdisciplinarity is strongly built into the strategy of the University of Turku. Instead of temporary projects, the SHS Education and Research Centre promotes the integration of disciplines on a permanent basis, enabling long-term integrative

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activities and evaluation. The operations model of the wide-ranging interdisciplinary Centre can be applied in any context of higher education.

Conclusions: First-year results of the Centre are promising. Our experience has shown that innovative interdisciplinary cooperation creates a fruitful basis for the development of more accessible, patient-centered and integrated social and health services.

Keywords: integration; universities; interdisciplinary education and research; social and health care; reform
