



Northern Dimension
Partnership in Public Health
and Social Well-being

FINLAND

9th Meeting of the Primary Health Care Expert Group

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Recent developments in Primary Health Care (after October 2019)



1. According to PM Marin's government programme, integration of social and health care continues. Focus is on prevention and on easy and equitable access to PHC. New, modern ways to deliver services, such as remote services and digitalization, are enhanced.
 - Funding for development of PHC is allocated for municipalities through a development programme called "The future social- and health care centre". The application period for this programme ended on the 30th of April 2020.
 - The programme has five goals:
 - To assure clients' equal access to and right timing and continuity of services.
 - To strengthen preventive measures and services.
 - To increase quality and effectivity of services.
 - To ensure multi-professional and co-ordinated services.
 - To control the growth of social and health care's expenses.





- In Finland, the use of all health care services has diminished during covid-19-pandemic.
- This applies to emergency and accident care, hospital in-patient and out-patient care and primary health care.
- Personnel from non-emergency care have been trained for and shifted to acute work. However, so far there have been no problems in providing intensive care when needed. Thus non-emergency services are being set up again.
- The incidences of other infectious diseases than covid-19 have diminished due to measures taken to prevent covid-19, e.g. improved hygiene.
- Citizens have avoided all social contacts, which has led to avoidance of check up visits at PHC services as well. Also preventive services, including screening and immunization have been less used (e.g. childrens' immunization for measles has decreased).
- Some “treatment debt” has inevitably emerged. As a consequence, it is anticipated that in the future, more effort and resources for prevention and treatment of chronic conditions is needed.



Management of patients with multimorbidity during COVID-19



- When overall incidence of infections (such as influenza) has diminished, exacerbations of chronic conditions, such as chronic heart or lung diseases, have decreased
- E.g. number of diagnosed myocardial infarction is less than usual.
- There are signs that mental health problems such as depression might have increased (due to social isolation and/or economical problems), adding to other problems caused by multimorbidity.
- Due to avoidance of regular check up visits, no queue for PHC has emerged so far. However, the situation might be very different in the near future, when second wave of the pandemic is encountered.
- Service providers, National institute for welfare and health and Ministry of social affairs and health have launched information about the importance not to postpone regular and planned visits to health care (for patients) and about the need to take care of chronic conditions as planned, even amidst a pandemic (for providers) .
- The subject has been widely discussed also on the media.

