

World Patient Safety Day 2024

FINLAND

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Introduction

One-fifth of all patient damage reimbursements in Finland are due to diagnostic delays, particularly in trauma, acute care, and oncology. Diagnostic errors are categorized into three types: delayed diagnosis, incorrect diagnosis, and no diagnosis at all (Tolvi, 2024).

Finland is divided into 21+1 wellbeing service counties, each serving a varying population size, with the smallest serving around 40,000 people and the largest over 1 million. The country is also home to five university hospitals, each responsible for specific healthcare regions. The largest of these is located in Helsinki.

Several wellbeing services counties held their own patient safety days, focusing on diagnostic delays from both practical and legal perspectives. This year, the World Patient Safety Day Seminar took place in Helsinki, in collaboration with the Finnish Center for Client and Patient Safety and the Helsinki University Hospital Diagnostic Center. This diagnostic center provides radiology and laboratory services to more than a third of Finland's population.

The seminar topics included automation, patient identification, guidance, and the use of AI in imaging. The event was held both onsite and as a live webinar, with recordings available on-demand.

National Seminar

Systemic issues within organizations, such as stress, poor communication, and inadequate organizational structures, often cause diagnostic delays. These issues prevent the quick transfer of correct information to the right individuals. The seminar focused on addressing these issues, particularly regarding communication and organization—both in simpler processes like patient identification and in more complex areas like digital phenotyping, imaging advancements, and laboratory services.

The four-hour seminar featured eight speakers and concluded with a panel discussion. There were 50 onsite attendees and 496 online participants, with overall feedback averaging 3.93 out of 5, indicating general satisfaction with the presentations.

Sanni Grahn-Laasonen, Finland's current Minister of Social Security, opened the webinar with a welcoming address.

The webinar was closed by Professor Tuija Ikonen, MD, PhD, who conveyed greetings from the WHO Global Consultation titled "Improving Diagnostic Safety and Implementing the Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021-2030," held in Geneva, Switzerland. The WPSD 2024 Campaign Video about diagnostic safety was warmly welcomed by the audience.

Seminar Part 1 – General Topics in Diagnostics

The seminar began with an introduction from Markus Henriksson, Director General at the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira). Dr. Henriksson discussed the essential components of a functioning healthcare system, particularly focusing on the quality work done in hospitals. In Finland, organizational quality, especially self-monitoring, is becoming increasingly important due to new regulations introduced in 2023. These regulations require organizations and professionals to monitor and correct themselves, report issues, and demonstrate how corrections have affected the organization.

Dr. Henriksson emphasized that patient safety work depends on individuals within organizations being unafraid to disclose errors. Disclosure should not result in job loss. He also warned about the increasing trend of newly graduated physicians moving directly into remote care and diagnostics. He noted that diagnostics require experience and skill and should be carefully monitored to avoid increasing diagnostic errors.

The second presentation, by Professor Damien Gruson of Clinique's Université Saint-Luc in Brussels, introduced laboratory medicine and patient safety. Professor Gruson highlighted the growing reliance on automated systems and the increasing use of digital phenotyping in healthcare, leading to more data inputs for diagnoses.

Sirpa Pohjala, District Manager at the HUS Diagnostic Center, gave the third presentation on organizational communication, using patient identification in sampling as an example. Although patient identification may seem straightforward, it is a complex process that requires continuous maintenance and oversight. Correct patient identification is crucial—no automation or AI can correct an error if the patient is incorrectly identified.

Seminar Part 2 – The Role of Laboratory Services and Imaging in Diagnostics

The second part of the seminar began with a presentation by Olayinka Raheem, Laboratory Manager at HUS Diagnostic Center. She discussed the importance of early cancer diagnosis, emphasizing that education for both patients and healthcare professionals is crucial. Early diagnosis often leads to less aggressive treatment, reducing both the cost and intensity of care.

Next, Dr. Mika Kortnesniemi, Chief Medical Physicist at HUS Diagnostic Center, presented on AI as a tool for quality assurance in imaging. He highlighted the growing body of medical research in AI, noting that it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep up with the volume of data. Dr. Kortnesniemi

also argued that current quality measurements focus too much on averages and need to shift toward assessing quality conformity.

The final session of the seminar was a panel discussion led by Laura Hollanti, featuring healthcare professionals and patient representatives.

World Patient Safety Day in Finnish Hospitals

Several hospitals across Finland observed Patient Safety Day, using the color orange to raise awareness. Many wellbeing service counties held local webinars to discuss diagnostic topics. Some counties also organized weeklong events, while others launched social media campaigns to promote patient safety. The wellbeing services county of Southwest Finland (VARHA) hosted a webinar discussing compensations paid for diagnostic delays in the region. The primary focus of the day was that care needs assessments are fundamental to patient safety (<https://www.varha.fi/fi/ajankohtaista/hoidon-tarpeen-arviointi-potilasturvallisuuden-perusta>).

Central Finland's wellbeing services county (KEUSOTE) held a celebratory event, awarding prizes to staff and care units for excellence in patient safety and quality innovation. The client- and patient safety award was given to a palliative center for its work in providing 24/7 nurse phone support (Keusote palkitsi henkilöstöään: arjen teot ja innovaatiot esille - Keski-Uudenmaan hyvinvointialue).

Western Uusimaa's wellbeing services county announced a prize for a patient transfer workshop aimed at increasing safety and professional wellbeing. This was the first year the county held such a competition (<https://www.luvn.fi/en/news/2024/09/western-uusimaa-wellbeing-services-countys-2024-client-and-patient-safety-achievement-has-been>).

Kymenlaakso's wellbeing services county lit up its hospital and a waterfall in orange, focusing on diagnostics and safe care for sleep apnea. This included using a night polygraph for diagnosis and offering digital care paths for sleep apnea patients (<https://kymenhva.fi/uutiset/asiakas-ja-potilasturvallisuusviikolla-nostetaan-esiin-diagnostiikan-merkitys-potilasturvallisuudessa>).

North Karelia's wellbeing services county (SIUNSOTE) celebrated the opening of a situation center, designed to ensure that the right services are available to the right patient at the right time. (Original article here).

Kainuu's wellbeing services county focused on creating a guilt-free patient safety culture, also lighting up their hospital in orange to commemorate the day (<https://hyvinvointialue.kainuu.fi/>).

Ostrobothnia's wellbeing services county (ÖVPH) lit up their hospital in orange and held events

promoting patient safety, in collaboration with the patient support organization OLKA and the FIMLAB laboratory services (<https://en.osterbottensvalfard.fi/>).

North Savo's wellbeing services county focused on remote services and the cyber threats they might pose (<https://pshyvinvointialue.fi/web/en>).

In North Ostrobothnia wellbeing services county (POHDE), the hospital area was illuminated in orange, with educational events for personnel and a focus on patient-facing events

(<https://pohde.fi/ajankohtaista/uutiset/oikea-diagnoosi-on-turvallisuuden-tae-asiakas-ja-potilasturvallisuuspaivaa-vietetaan-17-9/>).

South Ostrobothnia wellbeing services county held a week of events on device safety, accompanied by social media coverage (<https://www.hyvaep.fi/>).

Kanta-Häme wellbeing services county (OMAHÄME) focused on patient safety and diagnostic accuracy, sharing materials with both patients and professionals (<https://omahame.fi/>).

SUPER, the Finnish union for practical nurses, created a YouTube video promoting Patient Safety Day: [Link to Video](#).

Summary

The participation of various wellbeing services counties in a year full of national healthcare savings was very active, demonstrating that patient safety is a priority for our healthcare organizations. It was positive to see that most of the wellbeing services counties participated and had their own themes related to diagnostics. Most areas reviewed their own patient safety work without bias and awarded prizes for different concepts that had concretely improved not only patient safety but also the delivery of services.

From the perspective of the Finnish Center for Client- and Patient Safety, we aim to take a more active role in promoting all the World Patient Safety Day events next year. We are considering creating a webpage dedicated to all activities, presenting seminars and events in an open and searchable manner, while also promoting the professionals around the country who are leading client- and patient safety efforts in their daily tasks. This aligns with our values of openness and professional civility.