



Quality criteria for the Finnish health care organizations

The European Network of Smoke free Hospitals (ENSH) was founded in 1999. It is an international and independent, non-profit organization working in close contact with the Health Promoting Hospitals, following the principles of World Health Organization. Since then the network has become more global and it is now known as Global Network for Tobacco Free Healthcare Services (GNTFHS).

The network has developed tools to lead the process towards tobacco free healthcare. The first tool, standards and implementation criteria, provide the basis for a tobacco free policy. The standards can be used by hospitals and other organizations as a model, when improving services for both smoking/tobacco users and nonsmoking patients. The standards indicate that the management is responsible for providing adequate personnel and education in addition to electronic health care records for systematic action and follow up of the program. A smoking/tobacco ban on the hospital grounds is also included based on the aim of health promotion.

The second tool, the self-audit helps to evaluate how well the health care organization has succeeded and provides guidance on what action is still required to provide a quality service.

In Finland, most hospitals already have several years' experience of using the self-audit. Most Finnish organizations have reached the second highest or silver level, while a few with high scores, are advanced enough, to apply for the highest international level referred to as the GOLD FORUM. The application must be preceded by a national process of validation and verification to the organizations' self-assessment of having reached high level implementation.

In Finland, our Current Care Guidelines on Tobacco dependence and cessation are the scientific basis for treating nicotine addiction. The approach is based on systematic care of tobacco addicted persons using both mini intervention and more advanced methods including pharmacological treatment. The Global Network for Tobacco Free Healthcare Services standards, however, pay more attention to smoke/tobacco free culture of the whole organization and to governance, commitment and smoke/tobacco free environment.

Conclusions: The smoking cessation group of Tobacco-free Finland 2030 has prepared the quality criteria for the Finnish healthcare organizations to help health care professionals in systematic identification of smokers/tobacco users, cessation help and organization of follow-up. The group is also making an effort to facilitate the observation of the guidelines concerning people with special needs, for instance, pregnant mothers and their spouses, preoperative patients, and adolescents in dental health care by advising cards for personnel.

The structure of electronic health care records can help personnel to organize the follow-up systematically and to provide functional solutions that can be disseminated nationwide. Quality control is becoming more and more important in the future of social and healthcare reform.

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