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Observation as a method of self-supervision

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Observation at various levels

Inspection visits: the supervisory authorities perform inspection visits to operating units – some of them unannounced

- observing the operations of the unit
- interviewing residents, and their family members if available

Observation as a method of self-supervision

- self-observation by employees of their activities – self-assessment (DCM)
- assessment by outside observer (Elo-D method)



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Self-supervision in health care and social services

Self-supervision was enacted as a statutory requirement for all health care and social services in Finland, entering into force stepwise beginning in 2012, and it will continue to become more important in the future.

- a means for units to improve their operations themselves
- the supervisory authority inspects the implementation of self-supervision when undertaking monitoring measures at a unit
- methods being developed to facilitate the oversight of self-supervision through online data collecting in the future
- operating units must be given concrete tools that help them identify objects for development through self-observation – particularly issues that have to do with quality and customer safety.

What are the benefits of observation?

In 2016, Valvira circulated two extensive survey among care services for the elderly and mentally disabled, exploring maltreatment of residents at 24h housing units.

- the purpose was to find out about forms of maltreatment and how widespread they are
- reports from supervised units revealed that employees do not always recognise when their actions constitute curbing the customer's right of self-determination, restrictive measures or maltreatment
- ingrained inappropriate work practices or disrespectful speech may be so far entrenched in the operating culture of the unit that either no one recognises them or no one dares question them

Observation would be an excellent method for identifying inappropriate practices in the operating culture.



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Elo-D method developed in Finland

muistiasiantuntijat.fi/elo-d

Inspired by the Dementia Care Mapping (DMC) method developed in the UK, based on systematic observation of patients with memory disorders – Elo-D was developed as a care quality assessment method suitable for the Finnish operating environment.

- suitable for 24h services
- an outside observer spends 3+3 hours during one day in public premises for assessment – follow-up visit 3–6 months later, repeat 1–2 years later
- yields data on the unit's operations, customer experiences (positive+negative), interaction/assistance situations, operating models, the structure of the unit's everyday life and its physical environment
- feedback discussion, report and development plan

What is needed for successful observation?

- Supervisor efforts and leadership encouraging open discussion
- Employee empowerment for assessing their own activities critically
- Motivation for job self-improvement