

EVOLUTION OF HOSPITAL CLINICAL PHARMACY SERVICES IN FINLAND DURING YEARS 2017 – 2022 – A FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

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BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANCE

Pharmacists' involvement in patient care became more common along with system-based medication safety work in Finnish hospitals during 2011–2016. The first national survey was conducted in 2011 and repeated using the same method in 2016.¹ This development is in line with national and international patient safety policy initiatives and European hospital pharmacy statements.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To conduct the third national follow-up survey on hospital clinical pharmacy services in Finland in 2022 and compare the results to the year 2016.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in 2022 as a national online survey targeted to hospital pharmacies (n=22) and medicine dispensaries (n=23). The questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis.

RESULTS

The response rate of the survey was 64 % (n=29/45) covering 86% (n=19/22) of public hospital pharmacies and 43% (n=10/23) of medicine dispensaries (Fig. 1). Clinical pharmacy services were provided in 83 % (n=24/29) of the responding units. The number of clinical pharmacy staff increased between 2017 and 2022, and services were provided in more versatile environments. In particular, the services had become more common at admission and in outpatient units, such as first aid, emergency rooms, and outpatient clinics where medication reconciliation is essential. Furthermore, in some units (25%, n=6/24), services were also available in the evenings and during weekends in one responding unit. As in 2016, the system-based medication safety work and the comprehensive development of the medication management process were highlighted also in this survey. The most increased tasks were medication reviews and medication safety audits, whereas in 2016 the most increased task was medication reconciliation (Fig. 2). Surprisingly, pharmacists' participation in the patient's discharge had decreased. Despite the increasing prevalence of automation technology and pharmacy assistants, logistic tasks had remained on the same level as in 2016.

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE

Finnish hospital clinical pharmacy services have expanded in line with national and international guidelines and increasingly concentrate on promoting medication safety. The focus is currently on admission and outpatient units. In the future, more effort should also be put into discharge, because it would be particularly cost-effective by decreasing drug-related readmissions.

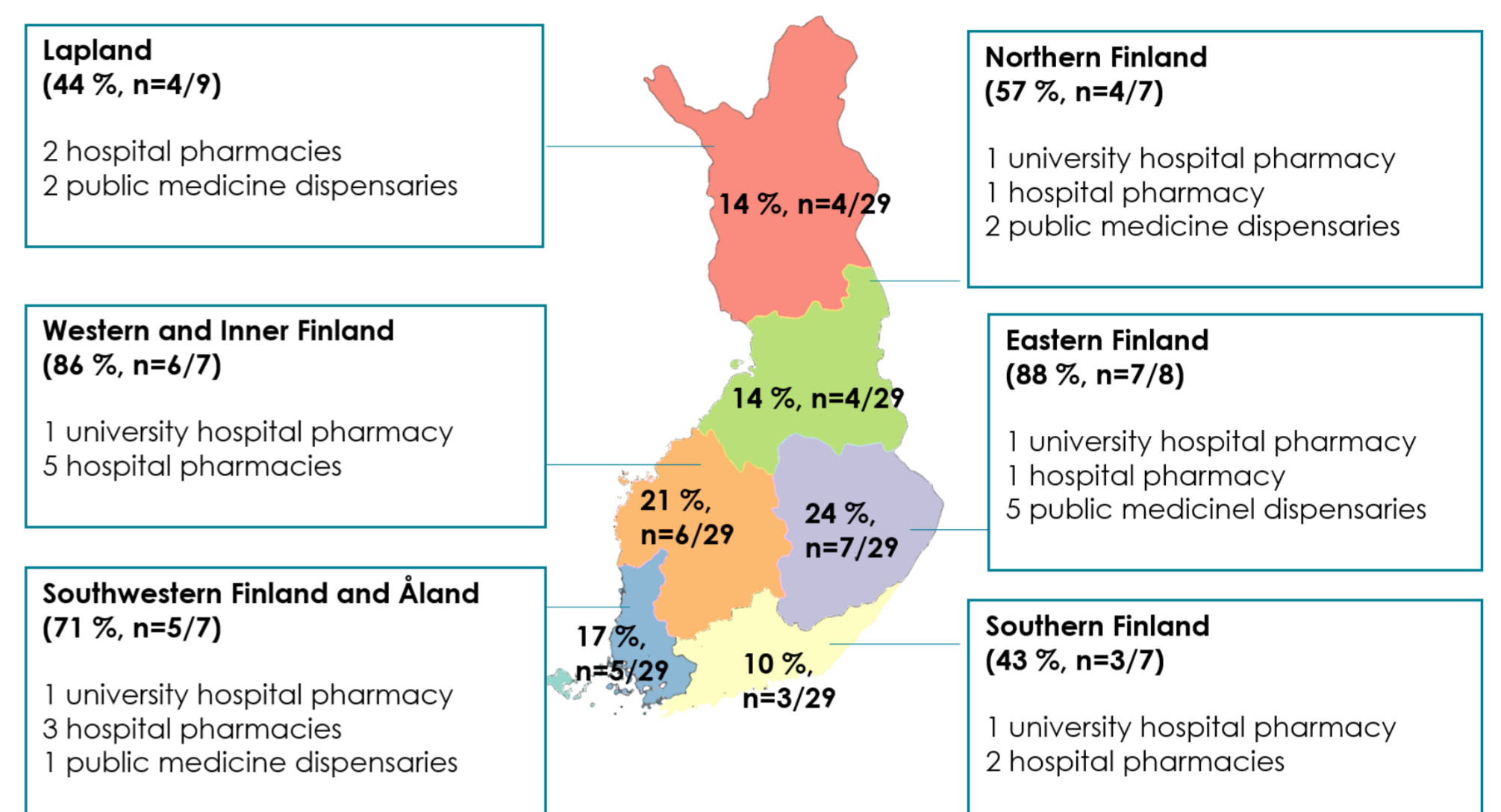


Figure 1. Location of the hospital pharmacies and medicine dispensaries responding to the survey (n = 29/45).

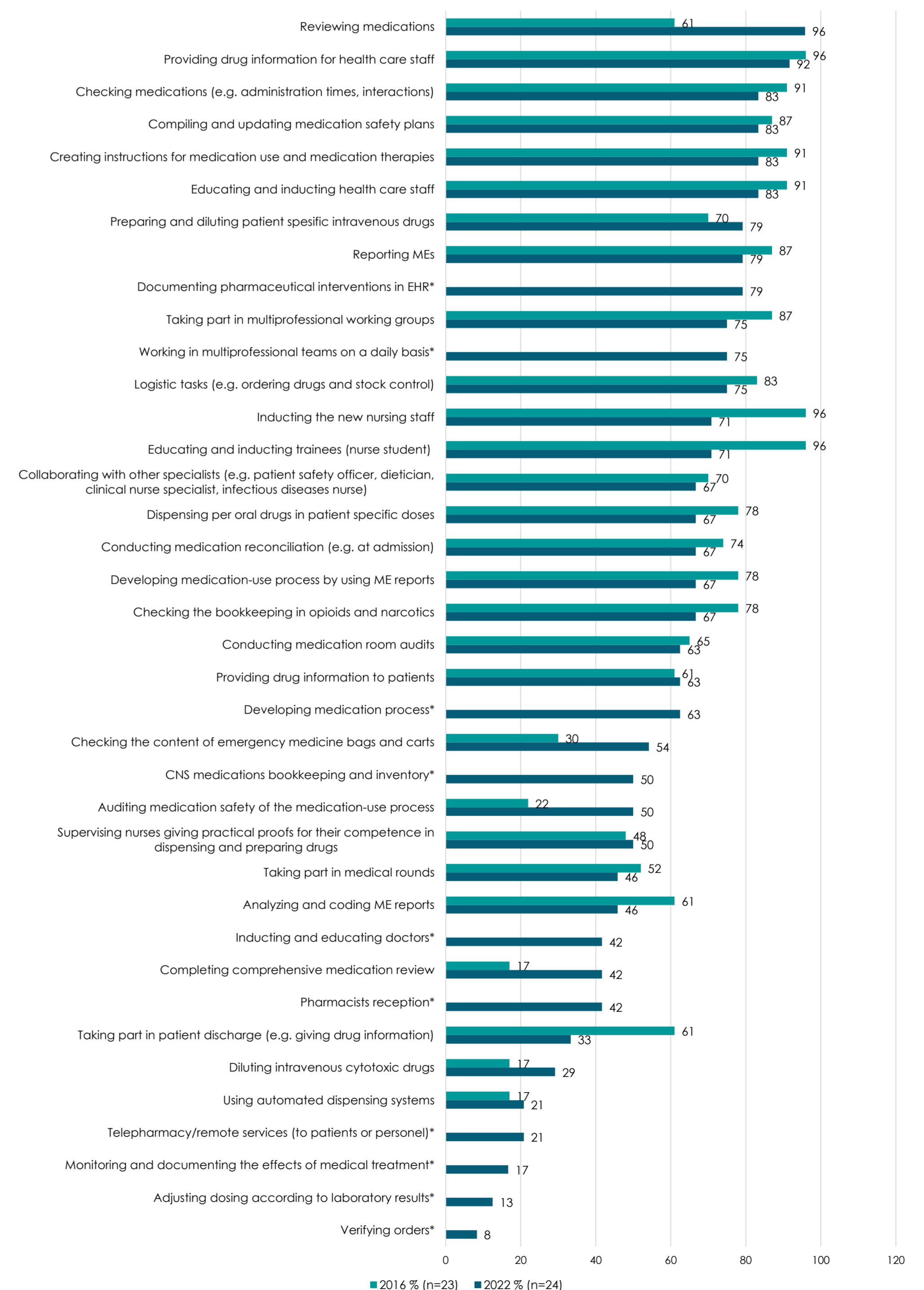


Figure 2. Reported tasks of clinical pharmacists (%) in 2016 and 2022. *New tasks (n = 10) added to the year 2022 survey. ME = medication error, EHR = electronic health record system, CNS = central nervous system.

