

Curriculum Change in Health Management and Leadership Studies for the Specialist Training Programs in Medicine and Dentistry in Finland

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Introduction

In Finland, specialty training can be undertaken at all five medical faculties. These days it includes a minimum level of 10 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) of management education in every 50 specialisation programs in medicine and all five in dentistry (Fig.1).

Aim

To describe how this 10 ECTS increase in the multi-professional management and leadership education has been implemented in the Universities of Tampere and Turku.

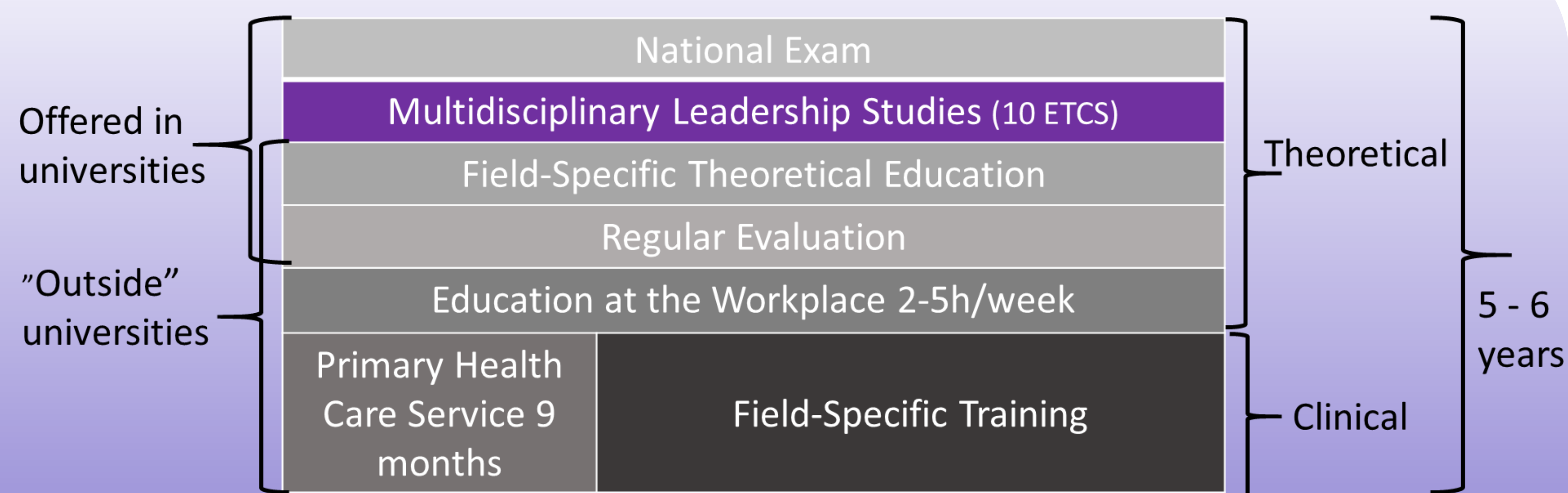


Figure 1. The structure of specialist training in medicine in Finland.

Methods

Professionals in health care are working more and more often in multi-professional teams. Complex and fluid health care environments require not only professional skills but also expertise in comprehensive and collaborative leadership. Hence, in the report of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in 2009, it was suggested that a 10 ECTS minimum of multi-professional management and leadership education should be included in all 55 specialisation programs. Therefore, a core curriculum dealing with leadership and management topics was included in national guidelines (Fig.2). Each medical faculty has implemented these studies autonomously but according to the national guidelines.

The management studies in both cities follow a flexible design. In Tampere, students participate in six study modules using modern technology-assisted teaching and learning methods. In Turku, attendees select contact studies from a yearly available supply, in addition to carrying out portfolio and project work. Furthermore, advanced management studies (20 ECTS) are also offered in both cities.

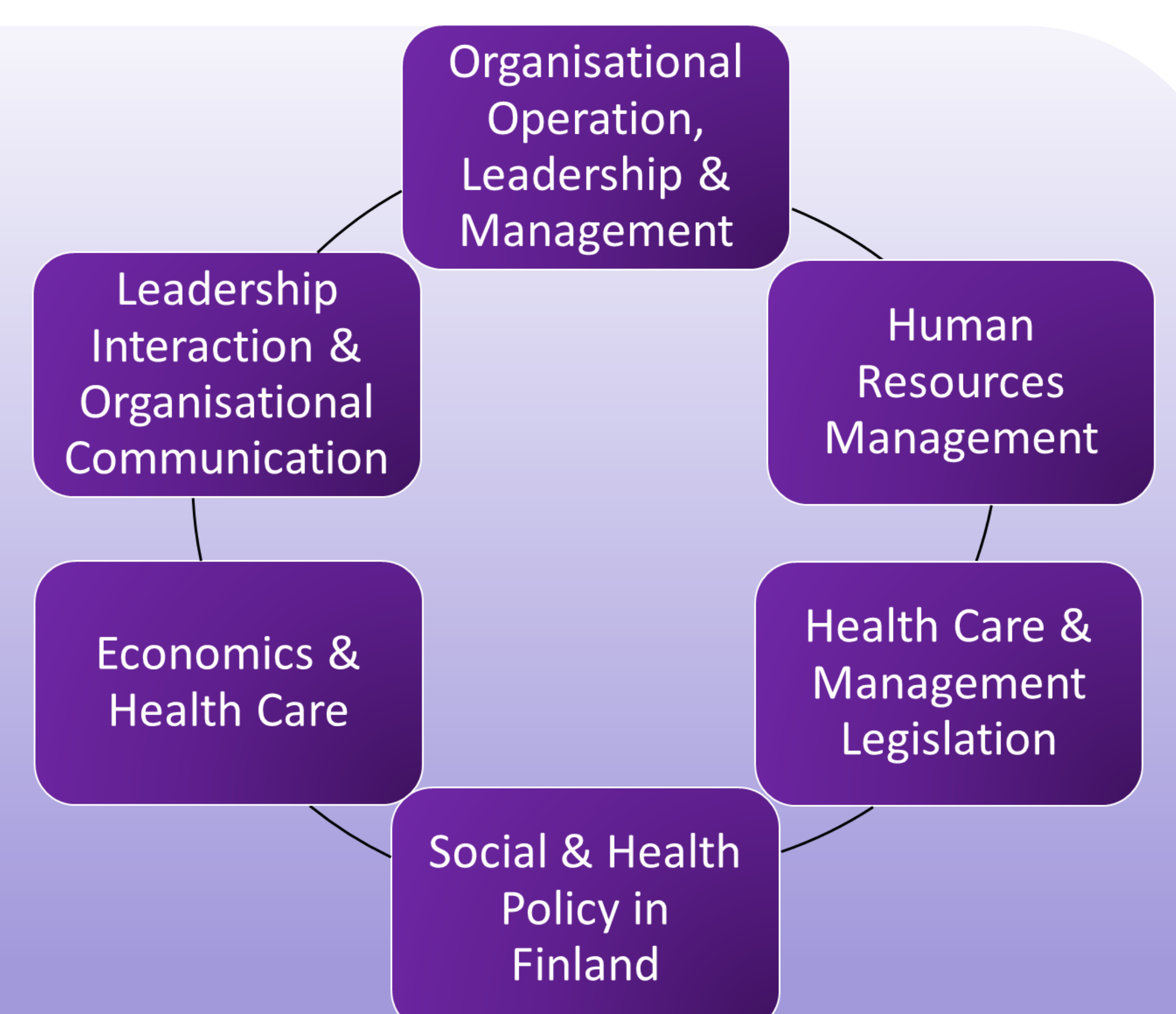


Figure 2. National core curriculum for management and leadership studies (10 ECTS).

Results

Students consider the aforementioned studies necessary and useful for the profession and work as a medical specialist (Table1). Most younger specialising physicians and dentists, as well as their trainers, reported the extent of 10 ECTS management and leadership studies to be appropriate. Overall, motivation and interest towards management have both increased among younger doctors. Additionally, it is crucial to have good workplace skills as a member of multi-professional teams.

Table 1. Summary of feedback concerning completed compulsory management and leadership 10 ECTS program (Score 1-5).

| Structured statement in feedback form | Mean |
|---|------|
| Management and leadership education is important to medical specialisation trainees. | 4.7 |
| The structure of the compulsory management and leadership studies 10 ECTS is fitting for the purpose. | 4.5 |
| Information regarding the compulsory management and leadership studies 10 ECTS was easily available. | 4.5 |
| Management and leadership studies conducted are beneficial to practice. | 4.5 |

Conclusions

Continuous development of medical doctors' management and leadership education is needed because of the changing healthcare environment which requires managers with both professional and leadership expertise. Even though not all professionals aspire to be managers, they are often thrust into these positions without having the necessary educational background to carry out management duties.