

eLearning environment for ensuring the competence in pharmacotherapy

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The Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health published the national Safe Pharmacotherapy Guideline in 2005 for the provision of pharmacotherapy in public and private social and health care units. The purpose of the guideline is to

- harmonise the principles for the provision of pharmacotherapy,
- clarify the sharing of responsibilities related to the provision of pharmacotherapy, and
- define the minimum requirements in all units providing pharmacotherapy.

The guidance requires that the competence in pharmacotherapy of health care professionals is confirmed regularly. Because in Finland there are thousands of people who have to show their knowledge in pharmacotherapy, we decided in 2008 to develop a computer based course, with online examinations, in pharmacotherapy. This course was designed by a multidisciplinary team.

Our eLearning course includes eight parts:

- The Basics of Pharmacotherapy
- Intravenous Medication
- Epidural Medication
- Drug Therapy for Mental Disorders
- Paediatric Medication
- Geriatric Medication
- Medication in Acute Care
- Cytostatic Medication

The first part of the course, The Basics of Pharmacotherapy, is mandatory for personnel who need to use and handle medicinal products and give patient education in their work. The other parts are required according to each person's job description.

In addition to passing the eLearning course, the employee must be introduced to medical treatment and she/he must show her/his practical skills e.g. administration of intravenous medication. After this process she/he will get a license to participate in the administration of medicinal products and in other activities related to drug therapy.

In Finland our eLearning course in pharmacotherapy is already widely used. 15 of 20 hospital districts, 17 private service providers, 17 municipalities or joint councils and 1 state institute have adopted it. A study on the outcomes of our course is in progress.