Innovation practices from the viewpoint of social and health care employees

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Introduction
One possibility to promote innovation capacity in public social and health care is employee-driven innovation. It means that employees are given regular opportunities to bring out their new ideas concerning their work and services for customers. Business research has clearly shown that active participation of staff in innovation process enhance growth, revenues and efficiency. It also add wellbeing at work. There is not much research on how superiors support employees in participation in innovation process or what employees themselves think about innovation as part of their job.

Aim
The aim of this study is to find out 1) How the employees in social and health care in Finland estimate innovation practices and management of them?, 2) How they assess own participation in innovation? and 3) How age, education, job stability and working time are related to the assessments?

Material and Methods
This study is part of research project OSUVA (2012-2014) funded by TEKES. Net survey was carried out in the year 2012. 6494 persons from 7 social and health care organizations were invited and 2282 participated in the study. The response rate was 35%. Most participants were female (92 %) and in age 55-65 (26 %) or 35-44 (23 %). The data was analysed by SAS-statistical program version 9.3 by using frequency and percent distributions, sum variables and analysis of variance.

Results
The mean of sum variables measuring superiors’ innovation related support activities, their role in innovation process, development practices in work places and the employees’ own innovation activity varied from 3.19 to 3.30 (scale 1-5). Young age, low education level and day time work were positively related to the means of most sum variables. Scientific education did add own innovation activity.

Conclusions
There is obstacles which prevent employees’ participation in innovation in public social and health care. Many of them could be removed by development of management and leadership but there is also a need for employees themselves to be more active innovators as part of their daily tasks.