



**TURUN YLIOPISTO**  
UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

**University of Turku  
Department of Nursing Science**

**Research Strategy and Research Projects  
2006 – 2010**

## **Mission**

The Department of Nursing Science at the University of Turku has a twofold research mission. First, nursing research at the Department is aimed at advancing the discipline of nursing science by producing new, high quality scientific knowledge. Second, it is aimed at improving the quality of nursing care in practice, responding to the health needs of the population and at empowering patients in their health related decision-making and activities.

Nursing research at the University of Turku is grounded in four basic concepts: human being, health, nursing actions and environment. Human individuals and their health are seen as the fundamental starting-point for nursing actions in different environments. The main focus of nursing research thus lies on the client/patient.

## **Issues**

Nursing research interfaces with health and science policy. With respect to health policy, key concerns include public health problems, prevention and nursing care. Nursing care has its own important role in solving these health problems, and nursing research provides the knowledge base on the strength of which these problems can be tackled. Nursing research at the University of Turku collaborates international, national and local health care strategies.

As for science policy, key issues include the general role of science and research in society, the role of nursing science among other health sciences and researcher skills in the field. It is important that there is close collaboration among the various health sciences, both in the field of basic and applied research. There is wide variation in the methodologies applied in nursing research, ranging from descriptive designs to randomised control trials, and it is therefore a major challenge for nurse researchers to continuously improve their research competence and to maintain discussion about research ethics.

## **Goals**

The Department of Nursing Science's main goal is to develop the content and structure of nursing research. Its particular priorities are revised at five year intervals. The Department is also committed to strengthening its role by

- strengthening its programmatic approach to research
- promoting national and international networking and interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary collaboration
- enhancing research capacities and opportunities through external funding
- improving management of research projects
- networking researchers and end-users of research results
- continuing to develop its doctoral and post-doctoral training programmes.

## **Leading Principle**

The Department's leading principle is to promote excellence through an ethical, critical, creative and collective research effort.

## **Strategic Tools**

### **DISSEMINATION**

The Department is committed to sharing the results of its research with other research fellows, collaborators, professionals, local health care organisations, patients, health service users and policy makers.

The Department of Nursing Science encourages its researchers and research teams to publish their results in appropriate scientific, high level journals. Other channels for the dissemination of its results include books, research monographs, general interest articles, and conference papers. Another integral part of the Department's research strategy is to organise conferences, seminars and briefing workshops for other researchers. These methods are supplemented by a website, media releases, brochures, newsletters, and open studia generalia lectures.

### **COLLABORATION**

Research projects at the Department of Nursing Science are based on national, international and multidisciplinary collaboration between health care organisations, research units, departments and universities.

## FUNDING

The Department of Nursing Science will continue to make the best possible use of all available national and international funding sources that support health related research. The purpose is to encourage faculty and doctoral students as well as postdoc researchers to apply for full-time research posts and research grants.

## QUALITY CONTROL

High standards of research and high quality reports are crucial to ensuring the trustworthiness of the Department's research activities. Mechanisms of systematic quality control are in place in line with University policies. Furthermore, the Department has taken onboard the recommendations issued by the panel of international experts that conducted an evaluation of Finnish nursing research in 2003. The quality of research is internally and externally evaluated through research projects undertaken by staff members and through students' doctoral theses.

## **Strengths of Department Research**

Since its inception two decades ago, the Department of Nursing Science at the University of Turku has established a recognized position in the field of nursing research at both the national and international level. The strengths of Department research include:

**Close connections between basic and applied research.**

**Emphasis on clinically oriented research, including preventive, curative and palliative elements from a variety of perspectives.**

**Client/patient centered orientation and focus on the quality of nursing care to support Finnish health care policy.**

**International collaboration for the development of research**

**Competent and high level researchers.**

## Research Structure and Priorities

### STRUCTURE

Research at the Department of Nursing Science is organised under the umbrella of an interdisciplinary and collaborative research programme.

### RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Research at the Department of Nursing Science has four main priority areas:

- Ethical Research
  - Value basis and ethics in Nursing
- Clinical Research
  - Clinical nursing
  - Mental health care and psychiatric nursing
  - Child, adolescent and family nursing
- Gerontological Nursing Science
  
- Research in Nursing Education
- Health Care Services Research

### RESEARCH PROJECTS

#### Ethical Research

#### Value Basis and Ethics in Nursing

##### Patients' Rights in Health Care and Nursing

- Leader:** Helena Leino-Kilpi, PhD, RN, Professor and Chair  
(heleiki@utu.fi)
- Purpose:** To analyse the nature and maintenance of patient rights in different fields of health care and nursing, both nationally and internationally.
- Goals:**
- 1) to add to our understanding of ethical principles, and patient rights in particular, in health care and nursing;
  - 2) to promote the maintenance of patient rights;
  - 3) to identify the factors underlying the maintenance of patient rights in different clinical fields with a view to fostering discussion about ethical issues in health care and nursing.

**More information:**

<http://www.med.utu.fi/hoitotiede/tutkimus/tutkimusprojektit/biomed/index.html>

**Ethical Codes and Learning Ethics**

**Leader:** Helena Leino-Kilpi, PhD, RN, Professor and Chair (heleiki@utu.fi)

**Purpose:** To analyse the nature and application of ethical codes in health care and nursing, both nationally and internationally.

**Goals:**

- 1) to add to our understanding of the content and nature of ethical codes;
- 2) to improve the use of ethical codes in practice;
- 3) to identify factors underlying the use and implementation of ethical codes in different clinical fields;
- 4) to foster discussion about ethical codes in health care and nursing.

**More information:** <http://www.zw.unimaas.nl/ecn/>

**Individualised Care (ICProject)**

**Leader:** Riitta Suhonen, PhD, RN, Quality co-ordinator, post-doc researcher (suhonen.riitta@kolumbus.fi)

**Purpose:** To analyse the delivery of individualised care by testing the Individualised Care Model both nationally and internationally.

**Goals:**

- 1) to test the Individualised Care Model on surgical, orthopaedic and trauma, internal medicine and gynaecological wards as well as in elderly care;
- 2) to improve the delivery of individualised care;
- 3) to increase discussion and debate about individualised care.

**More information:**

[http://www.med.utu.fi/hoitotiede/tutkimus/tutkimusprojektit/ic\\_project/index.html](http://www.med.utu.fi/hoitotiede/tutkimus/tutkimusprojektit/ic_project/index.html)

## Clinical Research

**Clinical Nursing****Evaluation of the Quality in Clinical Nursing**

**Leader:** Helena Leino-Kilpi, PhD, RN, Professor and Chair (heleiki@utu.fi)

- Purpose:** To evaluate the quality of nursing care in different clinical fields, both nationally and internationally.
- Goals:**
- 1) to create a basis for the evaluation of the quality of clinical nursing care;
  - 2) to develop and test instruments for quality evaluations.
  - 3) to improve the quality of nursing care.
  - 4) to foster discussion about the quality of nursing care.
- More information:** [www.med.utu.fi/hoitotiede/henkilokunta/leino-kilpi.html](http://www.med.utu.fi/hoitotiede/henkilokunta/leino-kilpi.html)

### **Decision-Making and Clinical Judgement in Nursing**

- Leader:** Sanna Salanterä, PhD, RN, Adjunct Professor (sansala@utu.fi)
- Purpose:** To develop a theoretical framework for decision-making in nursing as well as related instruments.
- Goals:**
- 1) to develop a theoretical framework for nursing decision-making and clinical judgement;
  - 2) to develop instruments for the measurement of decision-making and clinical judgement;
  - 3) to develop electronic nursing documentation as part of decision-making;
  - 4) to develop the content of nursing documentation.

### **Evaluation of the Quality of Patient Education**

- Leader:** Helena Leino-Kilpi, PhD, RN, Professor and Chair (heleiki@utu.fi)
- Purpose:** To analyse and evaluate patient education in different fields of health care and nursing.
- Goals:**
- 1) to create a theoretical basis for the evaluation of the quality of patient education;
  - 2) to improve the quality of health education;
  - 3) to develop instruments for the evaluation of the quality and outcomes of patient education;
  - 4) to develop new electronic patient education programs;
  - 5) to evaluate the learning outcomes and cost-effectiveness of patient education;
  - 6) to evaluate the learning and teaching of patient education in nursing education;
  - 7) to foster discussion about the importance of patient education.
- More information:**  
<http://www.med.utu.fi/hoitotiede/tutkimus/tutkimusprojektit/outofpat.html>

## Mental Health Care and Psychiatric Nursing

### Information Technology in Mental Health Care

**Leader:** Maritta Välimäki, PhD, RN, Professor (mava@utu.fi)

**Purpose:** To generate information on the clinical outcomes and cost-effectiveness of information technology (IT) use in with adults and adolescents in the field of mental health care.

**Goals:**

- 1) to evaluate the impacts of IT use on mental patients' wellbeing;
- 2) to describe the impacts of IT use on staff's knowledge, skills and attitudes, and organisational performance;
- 3) to gather evidence of the cost-effectiveness of IT use in everyday clinical practice.

**More information:** <http://users.utu.fi/mava/>

### Developing Patients' Rights in Mental Health Care and Psychiatric Nursing

**Leader:** Maritta Välimäki, PhD, RN, Professor (mava@utu.fi)

**Purpose:** To describe and assess the foundations of mental health work and psychiatric nursing from an ethical and legislative perspective and to enhance patients' rights in everyday practice.

**Goals:**

- 1) to analyse the content of ethical guidelines and health related legislation and the effect of these on the well-being and quality of care of individuals and groups.
- 2) to describe aspects of self-determination and deprivation of liberty in both international and national contexts.
- 3) to assess staff awareness of patients' rights in the field of mental health work and staff's attitudes towards mental disturbances.
- 4) to train mental health professionals to manage ethically problematic situations.

**More information:** <http://www.med.utu.fi/hoitotiede/>

## Child, Adolescent and Family Nursing

### Developing Child and Adolescent Nursing

- Leader:** Sanna Salanterä, PhD, RN, Adjunct Professor  
(sansala@utu.fi)
- Purpose:** To develop knowledge in the area of child and adolescent nursing.
- Goals:**
- 1) to describe children, adolescents and their families as patients.
  - 2) to develop effective nursing interventions for child and adolescent nursing.
  - 3) to develop tools for evaluating care and its quality.
  - 4) to develop effective nursing care paths and processes.

## Gerontological Nursing Science

### Elderly Nursing Care

#### Interventions in Nursing Care

- Leader:** Pirkko Routasalo, PhD, RN, Adjunct Professor  
(pirkko.routasalo@utu.fi)
- Purpose:** To describe, evaluate and develop evidence-based nursing interventions for older people at home and in long-term care, acute care and in specialised care.
- Goals:**
- 1) to describe the nursing interventions used in elderly care;
  - 2) to evaluate the use and benefits of nursing interventions used in elderly care;
  - 3) to develop and evaluate new, evidence-based nursing interventions for elderly care.
- More information:** <http://www.med.utu.fi/hoitotiede>

#### Rehabilitation Nursing

- Leader:** Pirkko Routasalo, PhD, RN, Adjunct Professor  
(pirkko.routasalo@utu.fi)
- Purpose:** To develop and evaluate gerontological rehabilitation nursing that enables older people to live at home or reduces the amount of time they have to spend in an institution.
- Goals:**
- 1) to continue testing of the Geriatric Rehabilitation Nursing Model;
  - 2) to further develop the Geriatric Rehabilitation Nursing Model;
  - 3) to improve gerontological rehabilitation nursing.
- More information:** <http://www.med.utu.fi/hoitotiede>

## Research in Nursing Education

### Evaluation of the Quality of Learning Outcomes in Nursing Education

**Leader:** Helena Leino-Kilpi, PhD, RN, Professor and Chair (heleiki@utu.fi)

**Purpose:** To evaluate the quality of learning outcomes in professional nursing education, with special emphasis on clinical and ethical learning outcomes. The project is mainly a national undertaking.

**Goals:**

- 1) to evaluate different clinical learning outcomes in basic professional nursing and health care education;
- 2) to develop instruments for the evaluation of the quality of learning outcomes;
- 3) to improve the quality of nursing education;
- 4) to foster discussion about the learning outcomes of nursing education.

**More information:** <http://www.med.utu.fi/hoitotiede/henkilokunta/leino-kiipi.html>

### Developing the Clinical Practice of Student Nurses

**Leader:** Elina Eriksson, PhD, RN, Adjunct Professor (elina.eriksson@stadia.fi)

**Purpose:** To describe, evaluate and develop the clinical practice of national and international student nurses in different fields of health care and nursing. Both basic and applied studies are involved. The project has mainly a national focus.

**Goals:**

- 1) to evaluate and develop clinical learning environments and supervision;
- 2) to develop instruments for the evaluation of the competence of student nurses;
- 3) to evaluate the competence of student nurses;
- 4) to develop an evaluation system for student nurses.

### Application of Nursing Research

**Leader:** Elina Eriksson, PhD, RN, Adjunct Professor (elina.eriksson@stadia.fi)

**Purpose:** To describe, evaluate and develop the application of nursing research in nursing education and nursing practice. These are applied studies with a national focus.

**Goals:**

- 1) to strengthen the application of research results in nursing education and nursing practice;
- 2) to develop competencies in the application of nursing research;
- 3) to develop an instrument for the evaluation of critical

- reading skills;
- 4) to evaluate the critical reading skills of student nurses and nurses;
  - 5) to foster regional development and collaboration in working life.

## Health Care Services Research

### **Turku Ageing Study – A Long-term Follow-up Study of Home-Dwelling Elderly People**

- Leader:** Seija Arve, PhD, RN, Director of Nursing  
(seija.arve@turku.fi)
- Co-ordinators:** Aapo Lehtonen, MD, Professor of Geriatrics (emeritus)  
Matti Viitanen, MD, Professor of Geriatrics, University of Turku
- Purpose:** To identify the physical, psycho-cognitive and social factors that are central to successful living at home for the oldest old
- Goals:**
- 1) to identify that factors that support independent living at home among elderly people so far as their quality of life is better than in institutions;
  - 2) to support multi-professional home health care personnel in practical nursing and medical care so that they can allocate their resources most effectively in the care of elderly.

### **Nurse Empowerment at Work**

- Leader:** Tarja Suominen, PhD, RN, Adjunct Professor  
(tarja.suominen@uku.fi)
- Purpose:** To describe, evaluate and develop nurse empowerment and to identify factors impacting nurse empowerment in different fields of clinical nursing care.
- Goals:**
- 1) to create a basis for the evaluation of nurse empowerment and factors impacting empowerment in clinical nursing care;
  - 2) to develop and test instruments for the evaluation of empowerment and factors impacting empowerment;
  - 3) to improve nurses' empowerment at work.
- More information:** [www.med.utu.fi/hoitotiede/henkilokunta/suominen.html](http://www.med.utu.fi/hoitotiede/henkilokunta/suominen.html)

**Table 1. Research Areas at the Department of Nursing Science**

<b>Ethical Research</b>	<b>Clinical Research</b>	<b>Mental Health Care and Psychiatric Nursing</b>	<b>Child, Adolescent and Family Nursing</b>	<b>Gerontological Nursing Science</b>	<b>Research in Nursing Education</b>	<b>Health Care Services Research</b>
Value Basis and Ethics in Nursing	Clinical Nursing					
Patients' Rights in Health Care and Nursing	Evaluation of the Quality in Clinical Nursing	Information Technology in Mental Health Care	Developing Child and Adolescent Nursing	Interventions in Nursing Care	Evaluation of the Quality of Learning Outcomes in Nursing Education	Turku Ageing Study
Ethical Codes and Learning Ethics	Decision-Making and Clinical Judgement in Nursing	Developing Patients' Rights in Mental Health Care		Rehabilitation Nursing	Developing the Clinical Practice of Student Nurses	Nurse Empowerment at Work
Individualised Care	Evaluation of the Quality of Patient Education				Application of Nursing Research	