



Practices in Health and Well-Being Promotion 4 / 2023

Healthcare clowning for child patients

Description of the practice: Nadja Laine, Kari Jagt & Aino Viertola

Peer review of the practice: Hanna Ahokoivu, Heli Järvelä,
Kati Myllymäki, Sauli Palmu & Kimmo Savela

Evaluation of evidence-based practices for health and well-being promotion

Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos

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Evaluation of evidence-based practices for health and well-being promotion

The evaluation of evidence-based practices for health and well-being promotion is an open knowledge-based management service for decision makers and professionals, which development began at THL in 2019. The service provides peer-reviewed information on evidence-based practices, which are published in the Practices in Health and Well-Being Promotion publication series.

The evaluation includes evidence-based practices for health and well-being promotion in different fields that promote well-being, health, safety, social inclusion, equity, equality and fairness, and prevent health and well-being inequalities, exclusion and loneliness, and promote socially, economically and ecologically sustainable development.

Practices in Health and Well-Being Promotion publication series

Since 2019, the evaluations of evidence-based practices have been published in the publication series. Each practice goes through a systematic evaluation process that is carried out using commensurate criteria. The evaluations are based on a description of the practice by its representative and a statement by at least two reviewers. The evaluation is carried out using a scale of 1–5 (poor–excellent). The evaluation focuses on the effectiveness, evidence and practical applicability of the practices. The evaluation aims to improve the practice.

Independent experts and experts by experience may act as reviewers. The method is open peer review, which is a means of quality assurance and development. The reviewer can choose whether to conduct the evaluation anonymously or openly.

The publication contains a description of the practice prepared by a representative of the practice and a summary of the reviewers' statements.

The languages of the publication series are Finnish, Swedish and English. Each evaluation is published as a separate PDF file on the thl.fi website and archived in Julkari.

Summary

Name of the practice: Healthcare clowning for child patients

Background and aim: The Finnish Hospital Clowns Association, which was established in 2001, facilitates professional and regular clown activities in all of Finland's university hospitals and in many central hospitals. Illness and hospitalisation of a child is a situation that places a burden on the family. Healthcare clowns are there to support the children, bringing them joy in a situation that often involves many stressful factors. The aim is to affect the hospital experience of the child and the family and the memory that it leaves: to create a positive patient experience, to promote a satisfying hospital experience and to offer psycho-social support.

Use of the practice: Hospitals in Finland started using clowns in 2002. They are in use in all Finnish university hospitals and in several central hospitals. Organisations operate under a European umbrella group in 19 different countries in Europe. Globally, healthcare clown activities have spread to more than 100 different countries.

Target group: The child patients of children's hospital wards and out-patient clinics, and their next of kin.

Applicability to different target groups: Easily applicable to different age and special groups. E.g. the clowns work among children on the autism spectrum, children with learning disabilities and those with long-term illnesses. The practice was piloted with adults recovering from mental conditions and elderly people with memory disorders.

Method: Clown activities are based on the power of a sense of humour, presence, and encountering others. Healthcare clownery is a way of interacting in a child-oriented and situationally sensitive manner through play, imagination, and improvisation. The clowns visit children's wards and out-patient clinics, preparing the children for medical procedures and escorting them there.

Monitoring and evaluation: Effectiveness, accessibility, and the well-being of personnel are monitored using a medical staff survey, a feedback questionnaire for families, information collected by the clowns, a survey on occupational well-being, and encounter statistics. Meetings are arranged with medical staff to develop cooperation.

Results and impacts: A peer-reviewed study (Karisalmi et al., 2020) shows that the presence of a clown in a cannulation had a positive effect on the patient experience of children and their families. In a medical staff survey, 93% of respondents agreed that healthcare clowns have a positive effect on a child's patient experience. International studies show that clowns have positive effect on the child's state of mind, easing tension, and experience of pain.

Effectiveness: Research has shown that methods with art and culture as a starting point promote health and well-being. A report published by the World Health Organisation in 2019 found evidence that art is of significance in the treatment, management, and prevention of several illnesses, and in promoting health and well-being.

Cost estimate: about € 800,000 a year.

Cost-effectiveness: Cost-effectiveness has not been researched, but feedback from medical staff and the experiences of the clowns suggest that clown activities can lead to cost savings in some situations.

Further development: The goal is to make clown work a more integral part of various treatment measures and to further increase the presence of clowns in hospitals.

Keywords: hospital clownery, applied art, promoting well-being, child patients, hospital, patient experience

Theme areas: Promotion of well-being and health in social and health care, Culture, Family well-being, Equality

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Peer-reviewers of the practice: Hanna Ahokoivu, Heli Järvelä, Kati Myllymäki, Sauli Palmu and Kimmo Savela

National website: www.sairaalaklovnit.fi

International website: www.efhco.eu

Evaluation category: The practice has been in use nationally for a long time (over 10 years)

Overall evaluation: 5/5 (excellent)

Excellent child-oriented established activity. Hospital clowning for child patients has been internationally recognised, and its effects have been extensively acknowledged.

Publication date: 28th February 2023 (in Finnish), 12th September 2023 (in English)

Tiivistelmä

Toimintamallin nimi: Sairaalaklovnitoimintaa lapsipotilaille

Tausta ja tavoite: Vuonna 2001 perustettu Sairaalaklovnit ry mahdollistaa ammattimaisen ja säännöllisen klovnitoiminnan kaikissa yliopistollisissa ja useissa keskussairaaloissa. Lapsen sairastuminen ja sairaalassa olo on perheelle kuormittava tilanne. Sairaalaklovnit ovat lapsen tukena tuottaen iloa tilanteissa, joihin liittyy kuormittavia tekijöitä. Tavoitteena on vaikuttaa lapsen ja perheen sairaalakokemukseen ja siitä jäävään muistoon: luoda myönteistä potilaskokemusta, edistää sairaalaviihtyvyyttä ja tarjota psykososiaalista tukea.

Käyttö: Käyttö alkanut vuonna 2002 Suomessa. Käytössä kaikissa yliopistollisissa sairaaloissa sekä useissa keskussairaaloissa. Eurooppalaisen kattojärjestön alla toimii organisaatioita 19:ssä eri Euroopan maassa. Sairaalaklovnitoiminta on levinnyt maailmanlaajuisesti yli 100 eri maahan.

Kohderyhmä: Sairaaloiden lastenosastojen ja poliklinikoiden lapsipotilaat ja heidän omaisensa.

Soveltevuus eri kohderyhmiin: Helposti sovellettavissa erilaisille ikä- ja erityisryhmille. Klovnit työskentelevät mm. autismikirjon ja psykiatrisella osastolla olevien lasten parissa sekä kehitysvammaisten ja pitkäaikaissairaiden kanssa. Toimintaa on pilotoitu mm. aikuisten mielenterveyskuntoutujien ja muistisairaiden ikäihmisten parissa.

Menetelmä: Klovnitoiminta perustuu huumorintajun, läsnäolon sekä kohtaamisen voimaan. Sairaalaklovnieria on keino lapsilähtöiseen ja tilanneherkkään vuorovaikutukseen leikin, mielikuvituksen ja improvisaation kautta. Klovnit kiertävät lastenosastoja ja poliklikoita sekä valmistelevat ja saattavat lapsia toimenpiteisiin.

Seuranta ja arviointi: Vaikuttavuutta, saavutettavuutta ja henkilöstön hyvinvointia seurataan useilla mittareilla: hoitohenkilökuntakysely, palautekysely perheille, klovnien keräämä vaikuttavuustieto, työhyvinvointikysely ja kohtaamistilastot. Hoitohenkilökunnan kanssa järjestetään tapaamisia ja kehitetään yhteistyötä.

Tulokset ja vaikutukset: Vuonna 2020 julkaistu vertaisarvioitu tutkimus (Karisalmi ym., 2020) osoitti, että klovnin läsnäololla kanylointitilanteessa on positiivista vaikutusta lasten ja perheiden potilaskokemukseen. Hoitohenkilökuntakyselyn vastaajista 93 % oli täysin tai osin sitä mieltä, että sairaalaklovnit vaikuttavat myönteisesti lapsen potilaskokemukseen. Lisäksi kansainvälisissä tutkimuksissa sairaalaklovnierialla on osoitettu olevan positiivista vaikutusta esimerkiksi lapsen mielialaan, jännityksen lieventymiseen ja kivun kokemukseen.

Vaikuttavuus: Taide- ja kulttuurilähtöisten menetelmien on tutkitusti osoitettu edistävän terveyttä ja hyvinvointia. WHO:n vuonna 2019 julkaistussa raportissa on löydetty näyttöä taiteen merkityksestä useiden sairauksien hoitamisessa, hallitsemisessa ja ehkäisemisessä sekä terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin edistämisessä.

Kustannusarvio: noin 800 000 euroa/vuosi

Kustannusvaikuttavuus: Kustannusvaikuttavuutta ei ole tutkittu, mutta hoitohenkilökunnan palaute ja klovnien kokemukset antavat olettaa, että klovnitoiminnalla voi joissakin tilanteissa olla kustannuksia säästävää vaikutusta.

Jatkokehittäminen: Tavoitteena on saada klovnityö entistä tiiviimmin osaksi erilaisia hoitotoimenpiteitä sekä edelleen kasvattaa klovnien läsnäoloa sairaaloissa.

Avainsanat: sairaalaklovnieria, soveltava taide, hyvinvoinnin edistäminen, lapsipotilaat, sairaala, potilaskokemus

Teema-alueet: Hyvinvoinnin ja terveyden edistäminen sote:ssa, Kulttuuri ja taide, Perheiden hyvinvointi, Yhdenvertaisuus

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Toimintamallin arvioitsijat: Hanna Ahokoivu, Heli Järvelä, Kati Myllymäki, Sauli Palmu ja Kimmo Savela

Kansalliset verkkosivut: www.sairaalaklovnit.fi

Kansainväliset verkkosivut: www.efhco.eu

Arviointiluokka: Kansallisesti pitkään käytössä ollut toimintamalli (yli 10 vuotta)

Kokonaisarviointi: 5/5 (erinomainen)

Erinomaista lapsilähtöistä vakiintunutta toimintaa. Lapsipotilaille suunnattu sairaalaklovnitoiminta on kansainvälistä toimintaa ja sen vaikutukset ovat laajalti tunnustettuja. Toiminta tähtää siihen, että lapsipotilaille tuotetaan iloa heitä kuormittavissa tilanteissa.

Julkaisupäivä: 28.2.2023 (suomeksi), 12.9.2023 (englanniksi)

Sammandrag

Praktiks namn: Sjukhusclowner för barnpatienter

Bakgrund och mål: Sjukhusclowner rf, som grundades år 2001, möjliggör professionella och regelbundna clowner vid alla universitetssjukhus och på de flesta centralsjukhus. Ett barn som insjuknar och sjukhusvistelse är en belastande situation för familjen. Sjukhusclownerna stöder barnet genom att ge glädje i situationer som är förknippade med belastande faktorer. Målet är att påverka barnets och familjens sjukhusupplevelse och minnet av den: skapa en positiv patientupplevelse, främja sjukhustrivseln och erbjuda psykosocialt stöd.

Användning: I Finland inleddes användningen år 2002. Används på alla universitetssjukhus och på de flesta centralsjukhus. Under den europeiska takorganisationen finns organisationer i 19 olika europeiska länder. Sjukhusclowner har spridit sig globalt till över 100 olika länder.

Målgrupp: Barnpatienter på sjukhusens barnavdelningar och polikliniker och deras anhöriga.

Lämplighet för olika målgrupper: Lätt att tillämpa på olika ålders- och specialgrupper. Clownerna arbetar bl.a. med barn inom autismspektrumet och på psykiatriska avdelningar, samt med utvecklingsstörda och långtidssjuka. Verksamheten har pilottestats på bland annat vuxna rehabiliteringsklienter inom mentalvården och äldre personer med minnessjukdomar.

Metod: Clownverksamheten grundar sig på humor, närvaro och möten. Sjukhusclowner är en metod för barnorienterad och situationskänslig interaktion genom lek, fantasi och improvisation. Clownerna går runt på barnavdelningar och polikliniker samt förbereder och följer barnen till åtgärder.

Uppföljning och utvärdering: Effektivitet, tillgänglighet och personalens välfärd följs upp med flera indikatorer: enkät för vårdpersonal, responsenkät till familjerna, information om effekterna som clownerna samlat in, enkät om arbetshälsa och mötesstatistik. Möten ordnas med vårdpersonalen och samarbetet utvecklas.

Resultat och effekter: En referentgranskade undersökning (Karisalmi m.fl., 2020) visade att clownens närvaro i kanylering situationen har en positiv inverkan på barnens och familjernas patientupplevelse. Av dem som svarade på vårdpersonalenkäten ansåg 93 % helt eller delvis att sjukhusclownerna har en positiv inverkan på barnets patientupplevelse. I internationella undersökningar har sjukhusclowner dessutom visat sig ha en positiv inverkan på till exempel barnets sinnesstämning, lindring av spänningen och smärtupplevelse.

Effektivitet: Konst- och kulturbaserade metoder har visat sig främja hälsa och välfärd. I WHO:s rapport som publicerades år 2019 har man funnit bevis på konstens betydelse för behandlingen, hanteringen och förebyggandet av flera sjukdomar samt för främjandet av hälsa och välfärd.

Kostnadsberäkning: cirka 800 000 euro/år

Kostnadseffektivitet: Kostnadseffektiviteten har inte undersökts, men vårdpersonalens respons och clownernas erfarenheter ger anledning att clownverksamheten i vissa situationer kan ha en kostnadsbesparande effekt.

Vidareutveckling: Målet är att göra clownarbetet ännu mer delaktigt i olika vårdåtgärder samt att ytterligare öka clownernas närvaro på sjukhusen.

Nyckelord: sjukhusclowner, tillämpad konst, främjande av välfärd, barnpatienter, sjukhus, patientupplevelse

Temat: Främjande av hälsa och välfärd inom social- och hälsovården, Kultur och konst, Familjernas välfärd, Jämlikhet

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Referentgranskare för praktiken: Hanna Ahokoivu, Heli Järvelä, Kati Myllymäki, Sauli Palmu och Kimmo Savela

Nationell webbplats: www.sairaalaklovnit.fi

Internationell webbplats: www.ehfco.eu

Utvärderingsklass: Evidensbaserad praktik som använts länge på nationell nivå (över 10 år)

Helhetsbedömning: 5/5 (utmärkt)

Utmärkt etablerad barninriktad verksamhet. Sjukhusclowner för barnpatienter är en internationell verksamhet vars effekter är allmänt erkända.

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Contents

1 DESCRIPTION OF THE HEALTHCARE CLOWNING FOR CHILD PATIENTS PRACTICE	7
1.1 Impact chain of the practice	7
Aim, background and need.....	7
Target group, experts and stakeholders	11
Methodology	13
Monitoring and evaluation	17
Results, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness.....	21
Management and administration.....	24
Communication	25
Ethics and risks	26
Resources and estimated cost.....	27
Further development.....	28
Summary of the impact chain	29
1.2 Evidence of the practice.....	29
Evidence-based scientific knowledge	29
Evidence-based expert knowledge	31
Evidence-based expert-by-experience knowledge.....	33
Summary of the evidence-based knowledge.....	35
1.3 Practical applicability of the practice.....	36
Applicability in Finland	36
Applicability to different target groups.....	36
Existing structures and networks	36
Training and training materials.....	37
Use in Finland and other countries	37
Importance of the practice for municipalities and wellbeing services counties	37
Comments on practical applicability	37
Summary of the practical applicability	38
1.4 Conclusions: the impact chain, the evidence and the practical applicability.....	38
1.5 References	42
2 PEER REVIEW OF THE HEALTHCARE CLOWNING FOR CHILD PATIENTS PRACTICE.....	48
Evaluation of the impact chain.....	48
Evaluation of the evidence-based knowledge	52
Evaluation of the practical applicability	54
Overall evaluation.....	56
APPENDICES.....	57

1 DESCRIPTION OF THE HEALTHCARE CLOWNING FOR CHILD PATIENTS PRACTICE

1.1 Impact chain of the practice

Aim, background and need

Aim

The aim of healthcare clowning is to have a positive influence on the hospital experience of the child and the family and the memory that it leaves. The work of healthcare clowns takes the form of clown care that creates a positive patient experience, promote a satisfying hospital experience and provides psycho-social support. Healthcare clownery is a way of interacting in a child-oriented and situationally sensitive manner through play, imagination, and improvisation.

1) The mood of children and families improves.

The aim is for the child to experience positive feelings with the clown, to laugh and play. The child processes emotions related to the illness through joint play and the feeling of fear is alleviated. The parents feel at ease when they see their children enjoying themselves, and the child is happy to see their parents relax. The clown offers parents ways to support their child. The clown strengthens the functional capacity and agency of the whole family. The atmosphere in patient rooms, wards and outpatient clinics becomes more positive – the spirit of the clown encounter remains, which increases play and playfulness in the child's everyday life at the hospital even if the clown is no longer present.

2) The child commits to treatment measures.

The aim is for the child to receive support from the clown when preparing for procedures. The atmosphere before the procedure becomes lighter as the clown acts as a softening link between the patient and the medical staff. The clown creates a playful connection between the child and the medical staff and promotes trust between them. The aim is that the child's procedure will go more smoothly and that the child will receive support from the clown in situations where the parents/other adults may not be able to offer it to them. During the procedure, the child relaxes and feels less pain when the clown takes their thoughts elsewhere. The child's self-confidence increases as the clown cheers them on.

3) The patient experience improves for the child and the whole family.

The aim is to promote a child-centred mindset and to strengthen interaction in a hospital environment. The child receives positive memories from their hospital experience, which can have a long-lasting effect. The child's fear of the hospital decreases, also decreasing the child's threshold for returning to the hospital. The child gets to experience art and feel noticed. With long-term patients, clowns create long-term partnerships that support children throughout the illness. The waiting times at outpatient clinics create situations that unite different families; goodwill, playfulness and a sense of community increase in wards.

The association-level aim is to enable nationally accessible healthcare clown activities, develop forms of work and expand the activities. The aim is to develop hospital-specific accessibility

together with medical staff, improve impact evaluation, increase the occupational well-being of clowns through the implementation of work organisation and clown support, develop new healthcare clown services and strengthen the national service structure. The healthcare clowning strategy is included in the appendices (Appendix 1).

Background

At the international level, organised healthcare clowning originated in New York, where a model called the Clown Care Unit (CCU) was established as part of the Big Apple Circus in 1986. Finns learned from this unit when healthcare clown activities were established in Finland. The activities were brought to Finland and established by actor Lilli Sukula-Lindblom in the early 2000s; the Finnish Hospital Clowns Association Sairaalaklovnit ry – Sjukhusclowner rf was registered in 2001 and clown activities were started in 2002. From the outset, the aim of the association has been to enable regular and professional healthcare clown activities. The association is officially bilingual and clown work is carried out regularly in both Finnish and Swedish, and yet more languages.

Throughout its twenty-year history, the association has developed long-term clown work in the care environment. Over the years, the association has expanded, instilled and diversified its operations. The activities started at the Helsinki Children's Hospital but expanded to university hospitals in Tampere and Turku as soon as in 2003. In 2012, the activities expanded to the national level, covering all university hospitals.

In the early stages, the association's activities focused on inpatient and outpatient clinic tours and were strongly based on clown pair work, but later it became necessary for healthcare clowning to better respond to the needs of hospitals, medical staff and child patients. In 2016–2017, healthcare clowns developed a work method at the Helsinki Children's Hospital in which healthcare clowns supported children on procedure days. In 2017, the association received a key project grant from the Ministry of Education and Culture as part of the extension of the Government's percentage principle. The grant was used to pilot clown work as a practice first at the Helsinki Children's Hospital and then nationally. Healthcare clowns familiarised themselves with the treatment processes of day surgery procedures and day hospital activities. In cooperation with the medical staff, we investigated the possibility that the healthcare clown could participate in the different phases of children's procedure days: waiting and preparing for the procedure, escorting the child to the operating room and being present during the procedure. Currently, preoperative clownery is part of the working day of a healthcare clown, alongside ward tours.

The key project included an effectiveness study that examined the patient experience of children and parents with or without healthcare clown support on surgery days that included intravenous cannulation. The study (Karisalmi et al., 2020) was published as part of the Aalto University LAPSUS project in 2020 and showed that healthcare clowning has a positive impact on the patient experience of the child and the whole family. Of the key project trials that are the subject of the evaluation, the strongest evidence was demonstrated by preoperational clownery (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019).

2019 saw the publication of the book *Sairaalaklovnit Suomessa* (Healthcare clowns in Finland), a collection of articles on clown activities in Finnish hospitals and the development thereof. The articles are written by representatives and experts from different fields. The collection was edited by Professor Hanna Suutela and published by the University of Tampere's Centre for Practise as Research in Theatre. (Suutela, 2019.)

International cooperation with European healthcare clown organisations has increased significantly in the 2000s. In 2011, the European Federation of Healthcare Clown Organizations (Efhco) was established in Brussels, Belgium. Sairaalaklovnit ry has been its quality-certified member since 2017. Currently, Sairaalaklovnit ry is a partner in the three-year ClowNexus - Clowning Connects Us project launched in 2020. The project is co-financed by the EU's Creative Europe programme and includes seven other European healthcare clown organisations in addition to Finland. The project examines and develops practical forms of work, how creative methods can be used to produce well-being as part of the social welfare and health care sector and how to offer opportunities to participate in cultural services to target groups that are otherwise easily excluded from them. The target groups of the project are elderly people with dementia and children on the autism spectrum.

Enabled by the STEA project grant, the association's activities will be expanded for older people with memory disorders in 2022. As of autumn 2022, healthcare clowns visit municipal sheltered housing units every week in five different cities (Helsinki, Turku, Tampere, Kuopio and Oulu). In spring 2022, we will launch the healthcare clown application Sairaalaklovnit, which will expand the clown activities, extend the arc of hospital encounters and maintain the relationship between clowns and child patients outside ward visits. The application enables the presence of familiar clowns in the daily life of children and families throughout the illness, including during home care periods. The application has been designed and implemented by the design company Adventure Club in cooperation with Sairaalaklovnit ry and funded by STEA. Remote clown activities were already tested in 2020 when the coronavirus situation paused clown activities in hospitals for a few months.

Over the years, Sairaalaklovnit ry has received recognition and several awards for its activities, including YLE's Cultural Gala's award for cultural well-being in 2021, the State Prize for Children's Culture in 2015, the DuoDecim Society's Cultural Award in 2012 and the Health from Art prize in 2010. Sairaalaklovnit ry is a member organisation of Soste (Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health) and a member of the Cultural Well-being Pool and VaLa ry (The Finnish Fundraising Association).

The growth and development of the association's activities have enabled the establishing of permanent employment relationships for the artists. Today, the majority of the association's roughly 20 artists work in permanent employment relationships, while previously all artists worked under framework agreements. The association currently also enables various forms of clown support that maintain the well-being and professional skills of the artists. Clown support includes training provided twice a year, couch support and the option for the clowns to use part of their working hours to maintain their professional skills. The association's budget has grown over the years as the activities have expanded and increased. However, the funding model has remained largely unchanged. The biggest change has been that university hospitals have started to participate in the financing of the activities with self-financed shares.

The hospitals occasionally receive visits from artists and volunteers from different fields, and the children's wards regularly employ play instructors. Healthcare clown work is performed by trained artists with the aim of producing results that go beyond mere recreation.

We work closely with medical staff, participate in department meetings and plan the development of activities together. Compared to other actors, healthcare clowning is not separate from the hospital's daily life or patient care. Instead, it supports and complements them. We work in environments where other parallel actors do not, such as operating and treatment rooms. Medical staff can call clowns in for challenging situations by using an emergency number, for example.

Hospitals also fund some of our activities. Clown activities do not compete with any existing recreational activities.

The objectives of healthcare clown activities are based on theories of the impact of art on well-being. The impact of art has been studied by several disciplines and from different perspectives, for example in relation to quality of life, mental health and physical and experienced health (Laitinen, 2017).

Need

Being hospitalised is an exceptional situation in a child's life and stressful for the whole family. Being in the hospital is not particularly comfortable for anyone, and a child's hospital visit may involve many different emotions, such as anxiety, fear, sorrow and surprise. The healthcare clown helps the child handle different emotions with play, takes the child's thoughts elsewhere, if necessary, brings comfort, strengthens interaction between the child and the parent and the child and the medical staff. Laughter is an outlet for stress and fear. During the clown encounter, the child relaxes and is empowered, and their mood improves. At the individual level, the memory of meeting a healthcare clown can have a long-lasting effect and make the next hospital visit easier. The long waiting times often experienced at the hospital will have meaningful content and joyful moments. For children, the hospital can be a strange and scary place with unfamiliar medical staff. With the help of the clown, the hospital becomes more accessible to the child and the needs of children are taken into account better. The threshold for going to the hospital is lower when the children know that the hospital has clowns.

Treatment procedures and hospitalisation may cause physical symptoms, such as pain and nausea, and mental strain, such as fear, worry and stress. The medical staff in the hospital are responsible for treating and curing the child's illness. The medical staff do not necessarily have the time and resources to listen to and have a meaningful encounter with the child. The medical staff of a hospital are trained to work with children, but because of their lack of resources, they do not have much time for anything other than actual treatment. Healthcare clowns meet children, listen to their wishes, handle their fears with play and support the child in a child-oriented manner. The red nose allows the child to process a variety of emotions, and it enables genuine interactive encounters. Healthcare clowns make the work of medical staff easier during procedures and their preparation. During a procedure, the medical staff can focus on clinical nursing as the clown takes care of the emotional needs of the child and family and prepares them for the procedure.

In the hospital, the child is subject to a variety of examinations that the child does not have any influence over. The clown can help make the child's opinion and wishes heard but will never work against the goals of the medical staff. The clown allows the child to feel that they are being heard and their wishes are being taken into account. In clown encounters, the child is not only the target of the activities, but also an active party with authority regarding the clown. If the child does not want a clown, the clown retreats from the situation. During play, clowns can reverse the roles of the patient and the doctor and make the doctor look much sillier than the child. This can make the doctor easier to approach and the whole situation more relaxed. The clown informs the medical staff about the child's interests and thus promotes interaction between the medical staff and the child as well as child-centred care. If the child likes horses, the clown can pretend to order them dreams about riding, for example. During anaesthesia, the clown can then pass this information on to the anaesthesiologist, who can continue the play if they want to.

Long-term child patients and children on long-term care periods are separated from their friends, classmates and relatives for long periods of time. Friendships may fade away and the child can feel

increasingly lonely. A child's illness may make it difficult to establish and maintain friendships, which may lead to exclusion. During a long treatment period, clowns become safe and familiar hospital friends with whom the child can play and share their feelings. In rooms with more patients and waiting areas, clowns create family-unifying situations where children also get to know other children.

As facilities, hospitals have been designed primarily for clinical nursing, and culture and art play a very minor role even though they have been demonstrated to have a positive impact on well-being (e.g. Koivisto et al., 2020). The extensive use of art in society creates meaningfulness and increases well-being (e.g. Laitinen & Honkala, 2017; Fancourt & Finn, 2019.) In accordance with the law, society must ensure that all population groups have equal opportunities to participate in culture and art (Act on Cultural Activities in Local Government 166/2019). Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child also contains a record of every child's equal right to participate in cultural life and the arts. Healthcare clown work guarantees art experiences even for children and young people in hospital care, and is thus promoting the realisation of equality. The strategies of university hospitals and the objectives listed therein include a promise of a good service experience, which is strongly realised and promoted by healthcare clown activities.

Art can also play an important role in good care. The WHO report (Fancourt & Finn, 2019) lists studies that show the effects of art activities in health care on both staff and patients. Introducing performing arts to inpatient wards has been observed to reduce anxiety and pain and improve mood and commitment to treatment for both child and adult patients (Houni et al., 2021, 54).

Target group, experts and stakeholders

Target group

Child patients aged 0 to 18 being treated or visiting in hospital children's wards and outpatient clinics, and the families of the child patients.

Experts and stakeholders

1. Hospital organization and management

Hospital leadership has the highest level of expertise regarding the hospital's activities as an organisation and on how clown activities in the hospital can be enabled at the level of administration, permits, and funding.

2. Medical staff

Doctors, nurses and therapists are experts in nursing. They have expertise in examining, alleviating and curing a patient's illness. The medical staff in each ward are most familiar with the operating methods and routines of their own ward. They have information on the illnesses and backgrounds of children in the ward.

3. Children and their families

Children and their families are the main target group for clown activities. Families have the best understanding and knowledge of the child. If the child is small, the family can relate what the child is afraid of or what they like. Children, on the other hand, are professionals of play and also

important experts in the planning of playrooms, general comfort, child orientation and recreational activities.

4. Financiers

Healthcare clown activities are funded by STEA, various foundations, private individuals and business donors, ministries and municipalities. In addition, the activities are funded with hospitals' self-financed shares. The support of the financiers enables the implementation of the activities.

5. Members of the association

The association has 53 members. Some of the association members are employees of the association, while others are independent.

6. Board of Directors

In addition to the Chairman, the Board has five members and one deputy member. The Board includes experts from different fields who have experience and expertise in, for example, association activities and the social welfare and health care sector.

7. Member and umbrella associations

Sairaalaklovnit ry is part of SOSTE, the Cultural Well-being Pool, The Finnish Fundraising Association (VaLa ry) and The European Federation of Healthcare Clown Organizations (EFHCO). SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health is a national umbrella organisation that acts as an influencer and expert in the field of social and health policy. The Cultural Well-being Pool strengthens and promotes the inclusion of cultural well-being as part of preventive services, care, rehabilitation, education and working life. VaLa ry, a cooperation network of non-profit organisations engaged in fundraising, promotes and develops a responsible donation and fundraising culture. EFHCO aims to promote healthcare clowning and its visibility, develop common operating practices in the field and provide support to its member organisations.

8. Higher education institutions and universities

The association cooperates with researchers and research groups at higher education institutions and universities. They have scientific expertise in the field of cultural well-being and experience in studying it from different perspectives.

9. Expert and patient organisations

Organisations in different fields have expertise in, for example, different diseases and their treatment, promoting equality and working with special groups.

10. Trainers

Twice a year, the association offers training for healthcare clowns. The trainers of recent years include Ami Hattab and Pedro Fabiao, both of whom are internationally recognised professionals in healthcare clown work and clowning.

11. Media

The media have expertise in reaching out to different target groups.

Methodology

Planning

Healthcare clown activities always start from the target group's need. The social welfare and health care sector is made aware of the possibility of acquiring clown work for different target groups, and if there is perceived to be demand and need for the activities, the activities are planned together with the staff. During the planning phase, the wishes and needs of both the staff and the target group are mapped.

New services always stem from the value base of healthcare clowns, i.e. the values of healthcare clowns determine them. The status of new services is proportioned to the basic function and the main objective of the activities. The association creates the conditions under which the new services can be tested and developed without any harm to basic operations. At the planning stage, a price list is defined for the services to be offered for implementation. Our practice aims to make it possible to carry out the testing and pilot as with as low a threshold as possible, and the aim is always to establish the activities as a permanent part of the unit's operating culture.

The needs and their understanding must originate internally from care institutions to ensure long-term cooperation, so constructive cooperation with care personnel plays an important role.

Before the actual clown visits, we familiarise ourselves with the organisation and its personnel and explain our work and its purpose. Together with the staff, we tailor practical implementation to meet the wishes and needs. We can also hold a workshop where the staff can familiarise themselves with the basics of clowning.



Image 1. Clowns entertaining children in the hospital lobby.

Implementation

Healthcare clowning includes the following forms of work:

1. Ward tours

During ward tours, a clown pair visits wards and outpatient clinics to meet children and their families. Clowns tour paediatric wards (haematological, surgical, infection, emergency, into surgery from home, internal disease, intensive care, neonatal, day hospital, child and adolescent psychiatry, neurological, outpatient clinics, phoniatria). Methods used by clown doctors include improvisation, general silliness, song, music and magic tricks.



Image 2. Clowns on a ward tour.

2. Preoperational clowning

The purpose of preoperational clowning is to free up the resources of medical staff for administering treatment while the clown takes care of the emotional needs of the child and family and prepares them for the procedure. The procedures become faster because the children are better prepared for the situation. There are fewer delays caused by fears, among other things. The child experiences the situations as more pleasant, and the amount of pain experienced is smaller.

The medical staff informs the clown that there is a child about to go into the operating room. The clown meets the child in the ward, prepares them for the procedure, escorts them to the operating room and is present for the duration of the procedure or until the child falls asleep. The clown and the child go through the stages of the procedure and the equipment used in it, always through silly, clown-like play. Procedures involving clowns include, for example, day hospital procedures, MRI scans, rheumatic and bone marrow punctures, day surgery procedures, cannulations, blood tests, surgery and endoscopy. In preoperational clowning, the clown works alone to fully focus on the child and build a trust-based relationship, but also because operating and treatment rooms are have limited room.



Image 3. A clown escorting a child to a procedure.



Image 4. The clown goes over the procedure with the child through play.

3. On-call clowning

The medical staff can call clowns in for support in treatment situations. Clowns respond to the requests and wishes of the medical staff during their working day according to their capacities. Outside the clowns' working hours, the medical staff can send a message to the clowns' work phone and request a clown to meet the child.

4. Remote activities

Communication with healthcare clowns using the Sairaalaklovnit application. The application enables the child to communicate with the clown even after being discharged. Remote communication was developed and piloted during the coronavirus pandemic in spring 2020.

5. Home visits

In Turku, healthcare clowns visit the homes of children with cancer on a weekly basis. During home visits, the clowns continue and deepen their relationship with the child and the play started during the hospital period. Home visits give parents a small break and create a positive link between home and hospital.

Instillation

The activities are instilled by establishing funding for the activities and by committing the different parties to the continuation of the activities. An essential part of the instillation is demonstrating the effectiveness of the activities, which is continuously monitored with different indicators.

The activities are planned and developed in cooperation with the staff. The staff understand the importance of healthcare clown work and the role of clowns in the hospital. In return, healthcare clowns are trained to operate in a hospital environment and are subject to the same rules of confidentiality, safety and hygiene as medical staff. An open and confidential dialogue with medical staff is maintained and the activities are prepared to be revised and developed based on the feedback received.

Monitoring and evaluation

Indicators used to monitor the effectiveness of clown work include:

1. Medical staff survey for hospitals

The survey targeted at medical staff is carried out in all university hospitals every two years. The survey was last carried out in 2020. The electronic survey examines the thoughts and experiences of medical staff on the operation of healthcare clowns in the wards that employ clowns. The feedback form consists of several questions that deal with different areas. Respondents can evaluate how effective clown work is during procedures, for example. In 2020, 424 responses were received, and 93% of the respondents felt that healthcare clowns had a positive impact on children's patient experiences.

2. Effectiveness data collected by clowns

Healthcare clowns record oral feedback received from children, families and medical staff and their own observations on the effectiveness of clown work. Each year, there is an enhanced feedback collection period that lasts two weeks. It was last carried out in February 2022.

3. Hospital-specific encounter statistics

As part of their working day report at the end of each working day, healthcare clowns report the number of encounters they had during the day. Encounters with patients, families and medical staff are recorded separately. The annual number of encounters is compiled into a single statistics.

4. Feedback questionnaire and scoring by families

Feedback is collected from families through an electronic questionnaire, which can be found on the Sairaalaklovnit ry website. In the questionnaire, families can score clowning on a scale of 1 to 5, respond to multiple choice questions and give free-form feedback.

The effectiveness information collected using different methods is collected annually and processed by the association's Board of Directors and jointly with the artists. We develop our operations based on the feedback received. The artistic director of the association takes care of the quality and development of artistic work. The objectives of the work are monitored at the local level in city teams by the clowns in charge of each city. The clowns in charge meet regularly with medical staff in department meetings, maintain open communication with them and exchange ideas on cooperation and its development with them. The local clown teams are able to respond quickly and agilely to the requests and wishes of the medical staff. After each working day, the artists write a report that includes the number of encounters, so each working day is documented. Monitoring of objectives and impacts is systematic and continuous in the association.

Participation of the target group, experts and stakeholders

1. Target group

Healthcare clown activities are target group-oriented. The activities, their objectives and methods are defined so that they serve child patients and their needs as well and comprehensively as possible. The situation of the patients in a hospital varies greatly; someone may have a short outpatient clinic appointment, another is on the way to cardiac surgery and the third is in the children's psychiatric ward. With the help of medical staff, we are actively seeking situations and children that could benefit most from clown encounters during our working days.

Clown encounters always start with a child-oriented approach. Healthcare clowns do not have ready-made performances; instead, the work is based on encounters where the child actively participates in building interaction and increasing play. The clown always proceeds on the child's terms, listening to and probing the child's situation and feelings, and the child is always allowed to decide whether or not they want the clown.

The target group can participate in the evaluation of healthcare clown activities by giving feedback on the activities. Family members and parents can give feedback on the activities on their own on the Sairaalaklovnit ry website via the electronic feedback form. Oral feedback from parents and children is collected in an enhanced manner once a year. Feedback heard during the working day is recorded in the working day report and responded to with the necessary measures.

The needs of many special groups have been taken into account in healthcare clown work. Forms of work have been developed, for example, for children having procedures, children in psychiatric wards and children on the autism spectrum. Cloning Connects Us - ClowNexus, a three-year project co-financed by the Creative Europe programme, was developed for children on the autism spectrum. Development work and the piloting of the work method have been carried out in cooperation with the medical staff of children's neurological wards and units for intellectual disabilities, with the guidance of Finnish and international autism experts and experts by experience, and with other European healthcare clown organisations. One of the results of the development work has been a form of work in which the same clown meets a child examined for autism on several days, and in some cases also participates in therapist's and doctor's

appointments to support the child. When working with children on the autism spectrum, special attention has been paid to taking sensory sensitivity into account and working with different senses.

Feedback on autism work:

"Clown work is empowering interaction that progresses on the child's terms and does not require anything from them." (Oral feedback from a nurse, TAYS Paediatric Neurology, 20 January 2022, artist's working day report)

"The parents said that the best thing about the hospital period for the child, and maybe even the parents, was the clown (...) Great work!!!" (Feedback from a family, passed on by a neuropsychologist, ULS 2 November 2021, artist's working day report)

2. Hospital organization and management

Every year, operation agreements are signed with hospital leadership to determine the operating days of healthcare clowns and the departments where clown work is carried out. The hospital's contribution to the funding of clown activities is also agreed annually with the hospital's management. In addition, the permission of hospital leadership enables a biennial survey for medical staff.

3. Medical staff

Healthcare clowns work in close cooperation with medical staff and are provided with relevant advance information on the children; for example, if the child has sensory sensitivity, developmental delay, hearing or visual impairment, or other limitations. The nurses will also inform the clowns if the family speaks a language other than Finnish. Based on the advance information received from the nurses, clowns can, to the extent of their capacities, prioritise their work for children who need the most support. Medical staff can separately request clown help in, for example, taking a blood test or inserting a cannula. The clowns have access to on-duty telephones through which the medical staff can reach the clowns during their working days, but the phones can also receive requests outside working hours.

Regular meetings are held with medical staff, and the clown in charge participates in department meetings where practical matters are discussed and the staff's wishes and experiences are heard. Communication with medical staff is open and confidential; information and experiences are exchanged on both sides and feedback is given on situations that have arisen during the working day. Nurses and doctors in different fields have provided training for healthcare clowns, including on pain management, anaesthesia, psychiatric illnesses and the autism spectrum.

4. Children and their families

The family of a child knows the child best, and they can act as a bridge between the clown and the child. If the child is very scared or if the child's parent is very stressed, the clown may focus on the parent. By approaching the parent first, the clown can make better contact with the child. Feedback from children and families on healthcare clown activities is collected through an electronic feedback form.

5. Financiers

The financiers enable the implementation of the activities, and the association is responsible for implementing the funded activities as agreed. Funding has multiple channels. The financiers include self-financed contributions from university hospitals, STEA's targeted action grant, grants applied for with foundations and funds, and private donations (corporate sponsors and private donors). Depending on the funding provider, the operations are described and the use of the received grants reported to the financiers.

6. Members of the association

The members of the association can influence the activities of the association by attending the annual meeting and the association's meetings. The members of the association pay a membership fee to support the association's activities. Members are offered the opportunity to subscribe to the association's newsletter on healthcare clown work.

7. Board of Directors

The members of the association's board make decisions regarding the association's activities. The association's Board of Directors is an executive body. It is an institution elected in the association's meeting and subordinate to it. On one hand, it must take care of the tasks specified for it by law and, and on the other hand, implement the decisions made in the association's meeting. The Associations Act provides a general ordinance on the activities of the Board of Directors.

8. Member and umbrella associations

With the help of member associations, healthcare clowns can network with other actors in the field, participate in promoting cultural well-being together, and receive different types of support and training to strengthen the professional skills of healthcare clowns.

9. Educational institutions, higher education institutions and universities

Healthcare clowns cooperate with higher education institutions and university researchers. In spring 2022, there are several ongoing or planned cooperation projects. The University of Eastern Finland is currently conducting a doctoral dissertation on the links between healthcare clown work and the quality of life of people with memory disorders. We have also discussed the possibility of cooperation with researchers from the University of Turku School of Economics and the Department of Health and Social Management at the University of Eastern Finland. Scientific fact and general understanding of the impacts of art-based methods on well-being also increase the appreciation and demand for healthcare clown work. Increased cooperation on research and, consequently, scientific evidence on the effectiveness of healthcare clown work promote the credibility of healthcare clown work as well as the development of the work and the expansion of its working methods to new target groups. The association also offers its own competence and expertise to educational institutions. For example, healthcare clowns have trained physician students.

10. Expert and patient organisations

If necessary, the association consults experts and organisations from different fields in the development of its activities. For example, Autism Finland's experts by experience and organisational expert have trained healthcare clowns at an international healthcare clown workshop held in Finland in autumn 2021. In return, healthcare clowns have visited them to tell

them about the working methods of healthcare clowns, for example by organising a seminar on eating disorders.

11. Trainers

Regular training courses organised twice a year provide healthcare clown workers with opportunities for the development and maintenance of professional skills, inspiration, and sharing of experiences.

12. Media

The association provides information on its activities through various media, which allows healthcare clowning to gain visibility.

Results, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness

Results

According to studies, art activities can improve health, quality of life and happiness (e.g. Fancourt & Finn, 2019). Positive experiences on social welfare services increase the attractiveness and innovativeness of a place or region. The well-being of families increases and their experience of hospitals and social services improves.

Children's negative emotions decrease, their experiences of pain are alleviated, self-esteem improves, stress decreases, mental ability to function improves, and mood becomes more positive. Procedures become easier to handle. Parents' tension decreases. Clowns divert thoughts and help see things differently. Clowns bring comfort to the whole family in challenging situations and balance the power relationship between patients and the medical staff.

"We were in the day surgery ward with my daughter, and because of her hospital period last Christmas, the child had really unpleasant memories of all the procedures she went through. She was feeling down in the morning, and we had thought a lot of about what was going on and whether she was hurting, and so on. When we came to the lobby, there was a wonderful clown in the lobby that relaxed the situation and made my daughter smile and forget about the operation ahead. After the operation, a different clown came to the recovery room and the same story continued, just with a different clown. My daughter was over the moon. At the end of the day, she said it was a fun day and the clowns were funny. I agree with this opinion. Even us adults had some laughter therapy. Thank you for your important work. Thanks to you, the next time doesn't seem so scary." (feedback from a family member, ULS, feedback questionnaire for families 2021).

"The healthcare clown has helped a closed off child with cancer to play and be in contact with others." (doctor, KYS, medical staff survey 2020).

The whole family's image of the hospital becomes more positive. The clowns spread joyful atmosphere to the entire ward and increase the playfulness and humour there. Clown encounters are an art experience shared by the whole family, connecting family members and creating a sense of togetherness. Clowns increase interaction between families at outpatient clinics, corridors and in rooms.

"The child at the registration hatch was very scared and tense. Hid under their mother's jacket. The healthcare clown started a game of hide-and-seek with the child. The child's anxiety disappeared with

the game. There are many examples, this is only one of them." (nurse, TYKS, medical staff survey 2020).

Healthcare clowns are an effective way to make contact with the child and support the child in challenging situations. The red nose is a recognisable sign that gives permission to clown around. Cooperation with medical staff works very well, but it can still be intensified so that nurses and doctors are able to make even more versatile use of clowns at the hospital. Due to insufficient resources, we have to make choices about which children we meet during the day. We cannot reach all children who could benefit from clown activities.

Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness

During Sairaalaklovnit ry's 20-year journey, cooperation with hospitals and medical staff has developed a great deal. Our constantly deepened long-term cooperation shows that healthcare clown activities are desirable and that hospitals have also noticed the benefits of clown activities and their significance for children in the long term. Hospital leadership has shown its support for the activities and has been willing to further develop cooperation and enable the presence of clowns in operating and treatment rooms, for example. Hospital leadership has given us strong signals and hopes indicating that they definitely want to continue and even increase healthcare clown activities.

The effectiveness of the activities is measured on a regular basis using several different indicators (a medical staff survey, effectiveness data collected by clowns, hospital-specific encounter statistics, and a feedback questionnaire and scoring by families). In the long term, the accessibility of healthcare clown activities has improved; in 2017, the clowns met a total of 52,500 people, and in 2021 the figure was 65,272 people. Without the impact of the coronavirus, the meeting statistics for 2021 would probably be even higher, as due to the pandemic, clowns have not always been able to visit all wards, the number of family members in the hospital has been limited, and some central hospitals have been on a break due to the coronavirus. In 2017, there were a total of 1,108 clown working days, and in 2021, the figure was 1,524, which means that the amount of clown work has also increased.

Healthcare clowns are part of hospitals and the treatment provided there. Long-term patients have the opportunity to meet clowns regularly during treatment periods that last for several years. With long-term patients, the clown becomes a partner who takes part in the different stages of the child's care, supporting and bringing joy to the everyday hospital life. Encounters with clowns can have revolutionary effects on recovery, and encounters with healthcare clowns can bring comfort even after years have passed.

"We were able to participate in an experience of shared joy and connection with an anxious and depressed teenager when following a healthcare clown performance. The laughter and smiles that we finally shared were a great experience during a long and difficult period. Recalling the memory of the shared encounter also later helped snap the teenager out of an anxiety attack. I asked my anxious and hysterical child to recall that feeling of laughing together and being protected by me. This helped my child calm down and it also helped me as a parent. The experience is very valuable to us. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Art and encounters act as a healing and constructive force in our family's lives." (feedback from a family member, TYKS, feedback questionnaire for families 2021).

"It's good to see you after such a long time. Our toddler has grown into a preschooler. Back then, you were so often with us at the neuro ward and even sung happy birthday to the child. Thank you." (oral feedback from a family member, OYS, effectiveness data collected by clowns 2022).

In the long term, cooperation with medical staff can develop and deepen. Nurses are better able to utilise clowns in different situations, such as procedures. The hospital environment and the care provided there will become more human-centred and child-centred.

According to ArtsEqual's policy brief (Koivisto et al., 2020), society's investment in arts and education is also an investment in preventive social welfare and healthcare. Investments in art activities are investments in a good life, well-being, inclusion and the dismantling of intercultural tensions.

Healthcare clown activities aim at cost impacts based on the smaller time spent on procedures, decrease in the amount of pain medication and premedication needed by the patient and the staff's well-being at work. Healthcare clown work influences the positive patient experience resulting from the hospital visit, which has a significant impact on recovery, commitment to treatment and attitudes towards new treatment periods. A positive memory of the hospital experience is far-reaching, and the impacts can be health-economically assessed in euros.

There are cases in which the child or the child's parent has decided that premedication is not needed because the clown helped alleviate tension. Removing or reducing premedication may lessen the need for hospitalisation after the procedure.

"The mother said afterwards that they had hoped with their fingers and toes crossed in advance that a clown would come in (good experiences from previous times) and once they had seen the clown, the decision of not taking premedication was sealed." (extract from a clown working day report, ULS, 24 August 2020)

"[The child in the department] is a new patient and I spent a good while with them. We had to wait more than an hour and a half for the procedure (...) [the child] really liked the encounter, and according to the nurse, no premedication was needed at all." (extract from a clown working day report, TAYS, 19 April 2022)

Based on the feedback received on healthcare clown activities, it can be assumed that the presence of clowns may have saved costs and/or time in several situations:

"Exchanging the dressings of a patient with burns went smoothly and quickly as the clown diverted the child's attention to other matters." (Nurse, OYS, Medical staff survey 2020)

"In the case of one patient, it would have been very difficult to remove the needle from the infusion port if the clowns had not happened to come into the room. The patient forgot about the needle entirely and it was very quick to remove as the clowns joked with the patient. Thank you very much!" (Nurse, TYKS, medical staff survey 2020).

"The healthcare clown was definitely helpful when inserting a cannula – the clown helped draw the child's attention away from the scary procedure." (Doctor, KYS, medical staff survey 2020)

"I got great help from the healthcare clown when examining a little child. It would not have been possible to measure the heart film and blood pressure if the healthcare clown had not taken the child's attention away from the scary examination situation." (Nurse ULS, medical staff survey 2020)

"We recently called for healthcare clowns to help with the cannulation of a frightened child. On a previous occasion, we had to have three nurses hold the child so that the physician could insert the cannula (the child was also premedicated). I can only admire the professionalism of healthcare

clowns, how in just the right second they diverted the child's attention and the cannula went into the vein on the first try while the child was sitting in their mother's arms. Amazing work. We will continue to use healthcare clowns to the extent of our capability. Ten plus :)" (Nurse, OYS, medical staff survey 2020)

Healthcare clowns always proceed on the terms of the medical staff and the care work. In addition to supporting the child, the aim is always to facilitate the work and treatment measures of the medical staff. Inevitably, clashes sometimes occur and we take these situations very seriously into account in our activities. We encourage staff to always point out to us if the situation is not suitable for a clown visit.

"The clowns are required to have an accurate understanding of the situation and to collaborate with nurses, which mostly works out amazingly well. However, there have been situations where a clown's work has slowed down treatment (e.g. receiving a patient, starting treatment measures, measuring blood pressure). During a busy morning, the nurse should be left to properly work in peace, and non-fearful patients should only be entertained once the nurse has completed their own tasks. I would like to emphasise that some of the clowns do accomplish this very well!" (nurse, ULS, medical staff survey 2020)

Based on the feedback received, healthcare clown activities also have an impact on the staff's well-being at work and, consequently, the coping of the work community, which may also have an effect on costs.

"The healthcare clowns also bring a lot of joy to the staff. They're always polite and ask us which patient they should visit. If necessary, they are able to step back and vacate the scene. I have never felt that their presence was a bad thing." (Doctor, ULS, medical staff survey 2020)

"[...] And I think their visits lighten the nurses' mood." (Nurse, TAYS, medical staff survey 2020)

Management and administration

Organisation chart for healthcare clown activities in appendices (Appendix 2).

Sairaalaklovnit ry maintains and promotes national healthcare clown activities. Kari Jagt, Executive Director, is in charge of the administration of the association. His tasks include operational and artistic management as well as financial, personnel and association administration. The Executive Director is responsible to the association's Board of Directors, which includes the chairperson elected at the annual meeting and 3–5 other members. The Chairman of the Board is currently Anne Santamäki. The highest decision-making power in the association is exercised by its meeting where each member has one vote. One may become a member of the association if they adopt the rules and wish to support the association's activities. The association has 53 members.

The association employs a total of 19 permanent employees. In addition to the Executive Director, the Director of Fundraising, Aino Viertola, is responsible for fundraising, its forecast and monitoring, as well as corporate cooperation and sponsorship agreements, as well as external communications.

Of the administrative roles, three coordinator tasks have been constructed so that about 50% of the employment relationship is clown work and about 50% is administrative work. The association has found the model very functional. It allows those working in the administration to have constant contact with hospital work and an in-depth understanding of it. Project and research coordinator Nadja Laine coordinates projects, applies for funding for them and is responsible for evaluating

effectiveness and coordinating research cooperation. Communications Coordinator Elina Reinikka is responsible for the development of the Sairaalaklovnit mobile application and other video and digital content, project communications, internal communications and image bank maintenance. Fundraising Coordinator Markus Kaustell is responsible for the development of local fundraising, training product development, gig sales and social media.

In addition to administrative employees (managing director, fundraising director, three coordinators), there are 14 healthcare clowns in permanent employment relationships. The work is organised so that each university hospital city has its own city team (Helsinki, Kuopio, Oulu, Tampere, Turku), whose team leaders are the cities' clowns in charge. The clown in charge acts as the immediate supervisor of their own team and is responsible for the operative management of the healthcare clown work at their own university hospital. Every two years, the association elects an employee representative and a health and safety representative. The employee representative represents the employees in the meetings of the association's Board of Directors.

In addition to permanent employees, some shifts are organised through framework agreements as temporary jobs. Around ten persons work shifts for the association with the framework agreement. The association primarily strives to organise the work through permanent employment relationships, as it has been found to increase well-being at work and promote commitment to work.

Communication

All communications of the association are based on the association's values and serve the association's objectives. The purpose of internal communications is to enable a smooth flow of up-to-date information and open dialogue. Communication reaches all necessary persons, and it is equal, active and open. Many different channels are used in internal communications. Working day reports, document sharing and communication between artists are implemented in the Slack application. Every week, the matters to be communicated are compiled in an email message, Friday mail, sent to the employees of the association. Every month, employees are invited to a remote meeting to discuss topical issues and exchange experiences and news. The office team meets for administrative matters every two weeks. Administrative employees have different tools for sharing information, such as Dropbox and Google Drive. Clowns in charge and city teams meet regularly with local teams.

The task of external communications is to support fundraising, raise awareness of clown activities and create an image of a professional organisation. The principle is that the association's communications are accessible, respectful, engaging and provoke positive emotional reactions. Communication and fundraising are based on openness, transparency and the values of the association. The association's communications and fundraising are handled by the Fundraising Director and the Communications and Fundraising Coordinators together with the Executive Director.

The association's newsletter is published four times a year. It summarises the association's activities and current issues with a positive approach in Finnish and Swedish. The home page contains basic information on the association's activities, how support the activities, clowns and current campaigns. Media will be informed separately of larger campaigns and projects. The website also contains a link to the family feedback form. Social media put the spotlight on the daily life and encounters of healthcare clown work, but the expertise behind healthcare clowning and the studies and reports supporting it are also highlighted. The healthcare clown blog publishes longer

stories about clown encounters in the hospital, family experiences and the work of a healthcare clown.

The association participates in social and healthcare sector and cultural sector seminars and training that allows the members to network and increase awareness of clown activities. The association organises training in clowning and encounter art for social welfare and health care professionals and students as well as companies.

The Sairaalaklovnit application published in spring 2022 includes the Palloposti function, which is intended for communicating between clowns and children being treated in hospitals. The function enables the presence of familiar clowns in the daily life of children and families throughout the illness, including during home care periods.

At the international level, the association is involved in the activities of The European Federation of Healthcare Clown Organizations (Efhco) and participates in the meetings of the umbrella organisation.

Ethics and risks

Ethics

The ethical factors of healthcare clown activities are determined by the operating environment (hospital), the target group (children and families) and the nature and content of the work. Healthcare clowns commit themselves to an equal and equitable model for acting as both an organisation and as individuals. The three main values of the Sairaalaklovnit ry are play, equality and responsibility. These are implemented at the levels of the association, its hospital activities and external communication.

A clown working in a hospital is a trained performer who has signed an employment contract with Sairaalaklovnit ry and has the necessary training and experience in performing arts. When working in the hospital, the clown does not participate in activities other than the ones involved in their artistic work. The clown must be aware that the purpose of their work is to increase the well-being of patients in particular, but also the well-being of family and hospital staff. The performing artist is personally responsible for all their activities in the hospital. Their work is based on respect for the dignity, personality and privacy of the patient and the patient's family. The gender, ethnic background, religion, traditions, sexual orientation, social status, level of education or illness of any person the clown encounters in their work or any personal feelings or emotions that the artist may have towards the person in question may not undermine their professionalism and high morality at work.

Healthcare clowns are subject to the same rules of professional secrecy, safety and hygiene as hospital staff and the provisions laid down by law for employees working with children. In their work, clowns form a relationship with patients and their families. The artist is not obliged to maintain this contact outside their work, neither as a private individual nor as a clown. To ensure the quality of their work, artists must maintain and continuously develop their artistic skills as clowns and acquire theoretical knowledge related to the treatment of illnesses and medical terminology. The artist may not endanger patient safety. Patients must not be endangered by clown activity, supplies, or the artist's movements. The artist may not comment on conflicts within the hospital, criticism of nursing work or disagreements between the hospital's staff and management.

Risks

Healthcare clowning is a combination of two different fields: art as well as medicine and nursing science. When two different fields meet, risks may include different practices, values, working cultures and prejudices towards each other. The association trains artists to operate safely in a hospital environment. Values shared with medical staff include respect for patients' dignity and right to self-determination, fair and equal treatment of patients, and the ethical and professional nature of the work. The goal of a good patient experience can be seen as a common goal.

The risk of negative attitudes and prejudices is reduced by maintaining open communication with medical staff and communicating about clown work and its objectives. Clowns must also respect the medical staff and take the possibility into account in their activities that nurses or doctors may not want to include clowns in all situations. Preoperational clowning is always secondary to clinical nursing. This is reflected in cooperation by making sure that the clown is primarily the one that adapts their actions to the work of the medical staff. When working in a hospital, factors related to patient safety always pose a risk. The risk is mitigated by the fact that healthcare clowns do not participate in activities other than the ones included in their artistic work in the hospital.

The turnover of medical staff and the related information flow challenges pose a risk to the development of operations. The hospital as an organisation is bureaucratic, which is why it may take time to develop the practice further. The mental strain of clown work is also a risk. Counselling and other clown-support measures (monthly artist meetings, occupational health psychologist, joint training and coaching activities) have minimised the risk of excessive strain.

Funding and the constant uncertainty related to it are a risk for the continuity of healthcare clown activities. Acquiring funding is highly cyclical and difficult to predict. It is difficult to plan operations in a responsible and long-term manner.

Resources and estimated cost

Healthcare clown activities were launched 20 years ago. In this time, the association has grown and developed, and at the same time the activities and their financing needs have expanded. Today, the annual budget of the association is approximately EUR 1 million. The primary target group of healthcare clown activities are child patients being treated in the paediatric wards and outpatient clinics of university hospitals as well as the children's families. The majority of the association's activities (approx. 80%, EUR 800,000) are targeted at clowning in university hospitals. The association applies for grants and does its own fundraising to enable its basic operations. In addition to the clown work in university hospitals, the association implements separate projects, arranges clown activities in other care institutions (e.g. central hospitals) and performs small-scale service activities (training, performances). Other activities are arranged using individual project funding or sold services.

Healthcare clown activities have developed into a significant implementor of the patient experience of university hospitals. The management of university hospitals sees the value and significance of clown work, as does the entire medical staff. As several chief physicians at university hospitals have stated, clowning is an integral part of the satisfactory provision of care in a modern paediatric hospital and clowns should be included in the operating budget of hospitals, but clowning is a common target of savings when cost pressures hit.

There is currently relatively little social funding available for healthcare clown activities, and most of the work and related costs are funded by the association's own fundraising (grants, private

donations, corporate sponsors) and self-financed contributions from hospitals (= from the funds allocated for patient comfort by the Association of Friends of the University Children's Hospitals). The cost of clown activities in national university hospitals is approximately €800,000/year, the STEA targeted activity grant received by the association is €173,000; this sum has not been increased despite our application attempts, and it is the only regular support provided by society for healthcare clowning in university hospitals.

Healthcare clown work requires special professional skills, and employment has mainly been arranged on a permanent basis, taking into account the clowns' needs for further training, well-being at work and other employer obligations. The association permanently employs 19 people.

With our current resources, we are able to realise approximately 1,500 clown working days per year in university hospitals.

Salaries are the largest operation cost. In addition, there are direct costs related to the organisation of clown activities (phone and IT costs, clown supplies, travel costs, occupational health and well-being at work) and general administrative costs (financial administration services, insurance policies, membership fees). The association rents one office room in Suvilahti, Helsinki, which incurs facility costs. Clowns in university hospitals have access to a workspace/dressing room, which does not incur any costs for the association.

- Cost estimate: approx. EUR 800,000 per year
- Funding and liabilities: The revenue from the activities is presented in the estimate of revenue and expenditure (Appendix 3). Hospital contributions make up the largest share of funding (approx. 32%). University hospitals fund their contributions almost entirely with donations intended for patient comfort received from the Association of Friends of the University Children's Hospitals. Society supports the activities with STEA's targeted activities grant; approx. EUR 173,000 per year (approx. 22%). Other funding required by the activities is obtained annually by applying for grants and by fundraising directed at companies and private individuals (approx. 46%). Funding for the association's clown activities not held at university hospitals is arranged using separate project funding or sale of services (approx. €200,000/year).

Further development

Interest in our work method is constantly increasing, and we strive to meet this demand by expanding the use of art activities that increase well-being in different areas of nursing and crisis work.

The aim is to enable nationally accessible healthcare clown activities and to develop and expand healthcare clown work methods. In the future, we want to respond better to the needs of hospitals and to the service requests of medical staff. The use of healthcare clowns as part of the provision of satisfactory care and medical procedures can be further developed and cooperation with medical staff intensified. In the future, healthcare clowns may support nursing work in new roles. In Israel, for example, clowns from the healthcare clown organisation Dream Doctors are involved in 40 different types of procedures. See the [Dream Doctors website](#) here.

Summary of the impact chain

The association has more than 20 years of experience in operating in a hospital environment. Established and regular nation-wide clown activities. Hospitals see clown work as part of the provision of satisfactory care, and cooperation with medical staff is very advanced.

The artists of the association are performing arts professionals for whom the association continuously offers further training and support. Healthcare clown activities are an art form that has proven itself useful and is suitable for the hospital environment and the different target groups at the hospital. There is scientific research data available on the effectiveness of the practice at the national and international level. Based on feedback from families and medical staff, clowns play an important role in promoting patient comfort. Clowns bring happiness, create joy and laughter, alleviate experiences of pain and reduce fear. Clowns also improve the well-being of medical staff and ease procedures.

At the structural level, we strive to establish healthcare clown work as part of social and health care services, strengthen the service structure of national healthcare clown activities and expand it to new target groups. In the future, healthcare clown work will hopefully be seen as an integral part of the hospital care of children and young people. We want to develop our effectiveness evaluation, particularly with respect to cooperation with researchers. Funding for healthcare clown activities should be developed and an established funding model should be determined in order to enable the long-term development of the activities.

1.2 Evidence of the practice

Evidence-based scientific knowledge

There is plenty of research evidence on the impact of healthcare clown activities on children and their families, and the results of the studies are similar to each other. However, several studies indicate that further studies are still needed (e.g. Lopes-Júnior, L. et al. 2020). Studies have shown that art affects well-being, but no individual study can offer unambiguous answers on how or why art has such an effect because these are complex phenomena dependent on individual experience (Laitinen, 2017, 39).

Based on the studies, playful interaction between a child and healthcare clowns can minimise procedure-related stress, improve children's mood and reduce the pain experienced (e.g. Alcântara et al., 2016; Markova et al., 2021; Lopes-Júnior et al., 2020; Scheel et al., 2017, Ben-Pazi et al., 2017). During a procedure, the healthcare clown has a positive effect on how long the child cries and the level of the child's anxiety (Meiri et al., 2016).

A critical research review (Lopes-Júnior et al., 2020) examined 24 studies, 12 of which showed that children and young people who spent time with a healthcare clown, either in the presence of a parent or without a parent, reported either feeling significantly less anxiety or indicated better psychological adaptation before and during painful procedures. In four studies, researchers reported that the cortisol concentration of saliva was lower after healthcare clown visits compared to the concentration measured before the intervention. (ibid.)

According one study (Shefer et al., 2019), after clown contact, children on the autism spectrum have been observed to show improvement in word production, social reciprocity and the number of smiles compared to the control group.

Studies show that medical staff also see the benefits of healthcare clowning and its positive effects on paediatric patients (e.g. Van Venrooij et al., 2017; Scheel et al. 2017).

One peer-reviewed scientific study (Karisalmi et al., 2020) on the impact of healthcare clowns on the experiences of children and their families participating in cannulation has been carried out in Finland. The study was carried out at the HUS Children's Hospital. The participants included 70 children aged 4 to 17, 38 of whom were exposed to clown encounters and 32 of whom (reference group) did not encounter clowns. A new digital examination tool was used to gauge patients' experiences before and after the insertion of a venous cannula. Children were asked about their feelings, their level of anxiety, the pain caused by inserting a cannula, and the best and worst things in the hospital. The parents were asked about their feelings, expectations and the effortlessness of the procedure and the hospital day. The study was part of Aalto University's LAPSUS research project. The children who were accompanied by a clown during the cannulation felt more positive emotions than the control group. These children said that the preoperational clown was the best thing about their hospital day. In open answers, the most common response from family members whose child met a clown was gratefulness towards the preoperational clown and the entertainment they provided. (ibid.)

The practice has been subject to much research internationally, and there are numerous international peer-reviewed studies about it. Several studies have examined the effectiveness of the practice on paediatric patients (e.g. Wu et al., 2022; Markova et al., 2021; Sridharan et al., 2017; Alcântara et al., 2016), parents (e.g. Newman et al., 2019; Bruins Slot et al., 2018) and medical staff (e.g. Barkmann et al., 2013; Blain et al., 2011; Mortamet et al., 2017, p.3; Ford et al., 2013, p.9). The studies have utilised many different methods. More than 100 studies were reviewed in a fairly recent research review (Lopes-Júnior et al., 2020), of which 24 studies were selected for further examination on the basis of the research quality criteria. Of these studies, 13 were randomised controlled studies, and the remaining 11 were non-random controlled studies. There were studies from nine different countries. (ibid.)

The majority of the results of international studies can be applied to Finland. All associations operating under the European umbrella organisation Efhco meet the umbrella organisation's quality standards. Experience and cooperation with European healthcare clown organisations has shown in practice that many organisations, regardless of the country in which they operate, have a very similar way of doing healthcare clown work. The work is based on the same values and a shared understanding of the way high-quality clowning should be implemented in a hospital environment.

We do not have precise information on ongoing international investigations; most likely there are several. A doctoral dissertation on the effectiveness of healthcare clowning on older people with memory disorders is underway at the University of Eastern Finland, and negotiations are being held with researchers from the University of Eastern Finland and the Turku School of Economics on cooperation to gauge the effectiveness of clown work in the children's wards of hospitals.

Scientific evidence of the cost-effectiveness of healthcare clown activities is limited and little studied. Feedback from medical staff and the experiences of clowns suggest that clown activities can have a cost-saving effect in some situations. More research is needed to reliably assess potential

cost-effectiveness. However, art and culture in general can be considered to have a positive impact on health care costs (see Houni et al., 2021, p. 147).

Katja Mäenpää's thesis (2018), the material of which was used to write a scientific article (Karisalmi et al., 2020), measured the impact of a healthcare clown's presence on cannulation. According to the research, the presence of a clown was not found to shorten or lengthen the duration of the procedure. (Mäenpää, 2018, p. 76.)

According to a study conducted in Israel (Gomberg et al., 2020), doctors and nurses have observed that healthcare clowns have a positive impact on productivity and may produce cost savings during certain procedures, such as imaging and radiation therapy.

Another international study (Kocherov et al., 2016) shows that using a healthcare clown in procedure preparation and during the procedure reduces pre-operative anxiety in children and reduces the overall time they spend at the hospital, which in turn reduces overall treatment costs.

The cost-effectiveness of healthcare clown activities has been studied little, so more research evidence is required to demonstrate a clear link between healthcare clown activities and cost savings.

Table 1. Amount of evidence-based scientific knowledge

	Research projects concerning the practice, number	Publications concerning the practice, number
National	1-3	0
International	>50	>50

Evidence-based expert knowledge

1. Effectiveness data collected by clowns

Once a year, there is a two week period during which clowns collect effectiveness data in an intensified manner. During the working day, the clowns collect oral feedback from families and staff and observe the impacts of clown work. Most recently, impact data was collected in February 2022 between 14 and 25 February.

The effectiveness information has been thoroughly positive; clowns, children, family members and medical staff feel that clown work is significant. The data collected by the clowns shows that the positive effects of clown work are very diverse and the impacts may manifest themselves in many different ways.

In addition to feedback that only consisted of thanks, many family members expressed the importance of meeting clowns in more detail: "Going to sleep was a calm process this time, thank you", "Thank you very much, this cheered us up!" and "It was good for the child to get something to focus on."

Feedback from children: "Clowns are fun, this is fun!" "It's boring to visit the day hospital, so seeing a clown is the best", "You're the best ever" and "It's not boring here when the clowns are here at the hospital too".

Feedback from medical staff largely features preoperational clown work. Based on the feedback, clown work has sped up and eased procedures, alleviated pain and helped children calm down.

"Thank you so much for being there when we took the samples. The baby calmed down completely."

Clowns also made a number of positive observations on the significance of the work during procedures: *"In addition to clown play, we also practised wearing a mask under the pretext of play, and it bore fruit even in the operating room: the child became less resistant and the mask was easily placed on their face while we continued playing until the child fell asleep."*

According to the artists' own observations, the presence of clowns lightened the atmosphere, relaxed stress, caused relief through laughter, facilitated interaction between families, shaped the experience of the hospital as a space, and gave parents a break and an opportunity to see their child play and be happy in the middle of the hospital day.

"A mother was in the room with newborn twins. She looked sad and worried when I peeked inside through a window. I said hello to the babies from the doorway, blew them kisses, even the mother, and gave my congratulations. The mother thanked me politely. I left and looked in the window. The mother was looking at her babies and smiling."

The effectiveness data collected by clowns shows that the benefits of the activities can manifest in many ways: from small reactions and changes in the atmosphere to clear verbal feedback. The benefit received may be very different depending on the family and situation. A clown can provide support for the stressed parents of one family, while another situation may require them to reduce a child's anxiety. For medical staff, the benefits of clown work are emphasised during procedures.

The effectiveness information collected by clowns is valuable because it is able get hold of feedback that is usually otherwise invisible, and it can also allow the documentation of the kind of subtle changes caused by clown work that may still have a major impact on the entire family's experience of the hospital visit.

2. Encounter statistics

Based on encounter statistics, healthcare clown activities are highly accessible. In 2021, there were a total of 65,272 encounters, of which 36% (23,598) were with child patients, 38% (24,606) with family members and 26% (17,068) with medical staff. Due to the coronavirus, the number of encounters is slightly lower than usual, as during the pandemic, the number of family members in hospitals has been limited, wards have placed more children than usual in protective isolation, and treatment rooms have occasionally been closed.

3. The Sairaalaklovnit Suomessa article collection

Edited by Professor Hanna Suutela, *Sairaalaklovnit Suomessa* (Healthcare clowns in Finland, 2019) is the first collection of articles on clown activities in Finnish hospitals and the development thereof. In the collection, doctors, nurses, theatre researchers, healthcare clowns and representatives of different fields examine the work of healthcare clowns from their own perspectives.

The article collection was written by 16 authors, including Anna Sepponen-Lavikko, specialist in anaesthesiology at Tampere University Hospital, Taava Leppänen, chief nursing officer at Helsinki University Hospital, and Kaija Puura, professor of child psychiatry at Tampere University Hospital, also the chief physician of child psychiatry at Tampere University Hospital.

In her article (2019), anaesthesiologist Anna Sepponen-Lavikko writes about the significance of clowns in preparing for and during procedures. "The basic principles of treating fear of the procedure are building trust and creating a sense of control. The cornerstones of building trust include interaction with the child and expressing interest and acceptance. In my view, a good preoperational clown can help create an atmosphere of trust. There are techniques that can be used to control fear that clowning implements: redirecting attention and guided imagery. Relaxing through laughter also works." (Sepponen Lavikko, 2019)

Evidence-based expert knowledge offers similar observations on the impact of healthcare clown activities. Expert knowledge shows that clown activities are accessible and that they provide happiness and support children and their families in stressful situations.

The expert knowledge is based on the healthcare clown activities carried out in Finland, so the effectiveness information can be directly applied to Finland.

Expert knowledge cannot offer systematic evidence of the cost-effectiveness of the practice. However, the collected expert knowledge suggests that the activities may also have positive effect on costs. According to experts, healthcare clown activities have been found to ease children's preparation for procedures and the actual procedures, for example.

"The nurse thanked the clown for the fact that the child handled the insulin injection with much more ease than in the morning. It took less than 10 minutes to do it with clown, when the same thing took an hour in the morning." (TAYS paediatric haematological ward, effectiveness data collected by a clown, February 2022).

In her article (2019), Anna Sepponen Lavikko writes that healthcare clowns and preoperational clowns alleviate the fear and anxiety related to the child's procedure. Preoperational clowning also provides an opportunity to perform the procedure completely without anaesthesia or nitrous oxide sedation.

Although there is no systematic evidence of cost-effectiveness on the basis of expert data, the information collected on the effectiveness of the activities suggests that healthcare clowning also has the potential to influence cost savings. Expert knowledge includes experiences that preoperational clowning can facilitate and speed up intervention situations, for example.

Evidence-based expert-by-experience knowledge

The biennial medical staff survey was last carried out in 2020. A total of 424 responses were received. The results of the survey provide a strong signal that hospitals understand the importance of healthcare clown work and see the positive effects healthcare clown work has on the child patient's experience and the atmosphere of the entire ward. Healthcare clown activities are seen as worthwhile and cooperation with clowns as welcome.

Main observations:

- The presence of healthcare clown relaxes the child and has a positive impact on the patient experience
- Healthcare clowns are helpful during procedures – they help children face scary situations
- Cooperation is meaningful – healthcare clowns increase playfulness and lighten the atmosphere of the entire ward
- Situational sensitivity is an important part of a healthcare clown's professional skills

93% of respondents completely or partially believe that healthcare clowns have a positive impact on the child's patient experience, and 94% completely or partially believe that the child laughs and becomes relaxed in the presence of healthcare clowns.

"You do great work and make the day of severely ill children. Sometimes even the nurse has almost cried when they see how even a very sick child brightens when you come to the room. A huge thank you <3" (Nurse, HUCH)

Preoperational clowning now plays a key role in the work of healthcare clowns. Based on the responses, medical staff have observed the positive effects of this form of work, as 89% of the respondents agree completely or partially that the clown helps the child face frightening situations in the hospital. Correspondingly, only 4% of the respondents feel that healthcare clowns are not useful in procedures.

"Inserting the cannula on a small patient went so smoothly that the child didn't even notice it when a healthcare clown was entertaining them, and the mother (who was probably more afraid than the child) laughed with tears in her eyes." (Nurse, TAYS)

Cooperation between healthcare clowns and staff is versatile and at times quite close. 95% of respondents agree that cooperation with healthcare clowns is rewarding. *"Our cooperation with healthcare clowns is going well, we can discuss patient-related matters together with transparency and talk about each person's role in a situation."* (Nurse, TAYS)

Many responses pointed out that the joy brought by healthcare clowns extends not only to patients but also to medical staff and the child's parents. 96% of the respondents felt that healthcare clowns lighten the general atmosphere in the ward. Based on the survey, healthcare clowns also increase the amount of playful interaction between the child and medical staff – 93% of the respondents completely or partially agreed with this statement.

"(...) The presence of healthcare clowns in the hospital also reminds us employees that humour and playfulness are part of everyday lives of children and families, even during serious illnesses or scary things. I hope that the Children's Hospital's operations will continue to include healthcare clowns." (Charge nurse, OYS)

The responses praise the situational sensitivity of clowns, which is an extremely important skill in a demanding hospital environment. However, one in five respondents have sometimes felt that the presence of clowns also disturbs their work. The causes of this include noisy play in the room next to the one where treatment is being administered. We encourage staff to always point out to us if the situation is not suitable for a clown visit. Healthcare clowns always step aside and leave the medical staff to work in peace. *"The clowns brighten the hospital's atmosphere. Sometimes loud noises have disturbed me in the middle of handling a patient matter, for example on the phone. Otherwise, I have nothing but praise for the clowns."* (Nurse, HUCH)

For more results, see the [2020 medical staff feedback survey](#) on the Sairaalaklovnit ry website.

The Sairaalaklovnit ry website contains a feedback form through which families can give feedback on healthcare clown activities. In 2021, families gave a total of 33 responses. All respondents gave the full five points on a scale of 1 to 5. Based on the responses, healthcare clowns have improved the moods of families, promoted a playful atmosphere in the ward and helped procedures run smoothly.

Extracts from feedback received in 2021:

"The clown cheered up and reassured both child and mother. As a mother, I was so caught up in my own feelings that I couldn't relax and be a good, playful parent to my child. The clown's tales brought about a more relaxed atmosphere for both of us <3"

"The child had no time to be nervous about the upcoming surgery at all, as joking with the clown redirected their attention cheered them up. It came as a surprise to me that the clown spent such a long time with us, and even escorted us to the door of the operating room."

"A small boy with abdominal pain arrived at the OYS Children's Clinic. How ill he felt before meeting the healthcare clown... But a minute passes, the helpful and friendly healthcare clown arrives, and the abdominal pain turns into smiles and laughter. The little man was so happy that he handled the stomach palpitations and other procedures well. You "clowns" bring only help and smiles! Continue bringing joy and smiles to the world."

We are constantly developing measures to get more responses to the family feedback questionnaire. Due to the coronavirus, we have not been able to share our brochure, which includes instructions for giving feedback, at the hospital, and this may have affected the number of responses. In March 2022, we piloted a period of intensified feedback collection at the Turku University Hospital. During the feedback period, we tour the wards in civilian clothing asking for feedback from families after the clown working day. The experiment was successful, and 32 responses were received during the month. The average score for the activities was 4.9/5.

"The clown made our little girl smile, which she never does for strangers, by the way. We discussed the encounter at home for a long time, and the next time the same clown appeared at the ward during an examination visit, she was all surprise and smiles! And it was a big deal to her that the clown remembered her name <3" (TYKS, 8 March 2022)

We have collected experiential knowledge about healthcare clown activities carried out nationally in all university hospitals and several central hospitals in Finland. The results directly demonstrate the impact the activities have on children and families in Finland. The results obtained using different feedback collection methods are fairly consistent and there are no significant hospital-specific differences. The results of the medical staff survey show strong evidence that in their work, medical staff see the benefits of clown activities and their significance to the patient's well-being.

We are currently investigating ways to enhance the collection of feedback, especially from families. The aim is to gain more in-depth experiential knowledge of the effectiveness of clown activities and to receive a larger quantity of feedback, which makes the feedback's importance in verifying effectiveness more significant. We are also negotiating cooperation with a research group of the Turku School of Economics in connection with feedback collected from families and medical staff and the further utilisation of the results of feedback questionnaires.

We think that in the future, the most logical way of collecting effectiveness feedback from families would be as part of the hospital's own feedback collection systems. Clown activities serve the duty hospitals have to ensure a good patient experience, and it is the responsibility of hospitals to measure and monitor their patients' experiences.

Summary of the evidence-based knowledge

One peer-reviewed study has been carried out on the practice in Finland and several dozen at the international level. In addition, the evidence of the effectiveness of the practice is supported by

information collected from experts and experts by experience. The potential effect healthcare clown activities may have on costs requires more evidence.

1.3 Practical applicability of the practice

Applicability in Finland

The association has 20 years of experience in implementing healthcare clown activities in Finland. The main task is to operate nationally in five university central hospitals. In addition, we operate in several central hospitals, and as a service, the activities can also be expanded to other social welfare and health care units.

Healthcare clowning carries out the duty hospitals have to ensure a good patient experience and is thus an essential part of the good care provided by hospitals. According to studies (e.g. Karisalmi et al., 2020), the activities have a positive impact on the patient experience of children and families.

In university hospitals, healthcare clown work is appreciated and part of the hospital's activities. As evidence of this, all Finnish university hospitals also fund healthcare clown activities in order to obtain significantly more of the services than would be possible on the association's own fundraising alone.

Applicability to different target groups

Healthcare clown activities can be applied to a wide range of target groups of different ages. In the hospital, clowns meet children of many ages and their parents. Children may have many types of limitations, including regarding physical activity, social interaction or development. Healthcare clowning is not a practice that depends on the patient's age, gender, language, ethnic background, religion, illness or any other such factors. Clowning can be adjusted to suit different situations and the needs of different children. The work of healthcare clowns is an encounter art that is created in the moment. The clown is open to meeting different people and is able to take different limitations and needs into account during the encounter.

The association also has experience of working with older people with memory disorders, adult mental health rehabilitees and adult brain injury rehabilitees.

Existing structures and networks

Healthcare clown activities are made possible in Finland by Sairaalaklovnit ry – Sjukhusclowner rf, which has created a functional service structure for national clown activities. Cooperation with university hospitals and central hospitals is a smooth and long-term project, and healthcare clown activities can be seen as part of the hospital service structure.

The greatest structural challenge of the practice lies in its funding. At the moment, the amount of support provided by society for healthcare clown activities (STEA grants) is small in proportion to the scope of the activities, university hospitals' need and the financial risk to the association organising the activities.

Training and training materials

The association trains new healthcare clowns and constantly provides further education for its artists. The association also occasionally offers clown training to outsiders.

Use in Finland and other countries

Use in Finland

The practice has been studied in Finland since 2020.

The practice has been in use in Finland since 2002. Currently, we have operations in all university hospitals and several central hospitals.

Use in Europe

Organisations from 19 different European countries operate under the European umbrella organisation (efhco). There are also numerous healthcare clown organisations operating outside the umbrella organisation across Europe. There are no accurate statistics on all healthcare clown organisations in Europe.

Use outside Europe

Healthcare clown activities have spread globally. There are no accurate statistics on the world's healthcare clown organisations. The 2018 Healthcare Clowning International Meeting (HCIM) attracted participants from 50 different countries around the world.

Table 2. Use of the practice in Finland and internationally

	Areas of use
In Finland	all university hospitals and several central hospitals
in Europe	at least 19 European countries
Outside Europe	spread globally

Importance of the practice for municipalities and wellbeing services counties

Healthcare clowning is a practice that is proven to promote the well-being of children and families during their hospital stay and to leave a happy memory that lowers the threshold for subsequent hospital visits.

Healthcare clown activities carry out the statutory duty of municipalities to promote equal access to and diverse use of culture and art and to promote culture and art as part of residents' well-being and health, inclusion and communality, as well as local and regional vitality (Act on Cultural Activities in Local Government 166/2019).

Comments on practical applicability

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Summary of the practical applicability

In Finland, healthcare clown activities can be seen as one of the pioneers and trailblazers of the use of art in wellbeing. The association has developed its activities for 20 years and created a functional structure for implementing healthcare clown activities nationally. We operate in all university hospitals, and through our local city teams, we can also serve smaller hospitals and social welfare and health care units if necessary. Our strengths are trained professionals and permanent clown work employees.

The biggest challenge is the funding of the practice. At the moment, the amount of support provided by society for healthcare clown activities (STEA grants) is small in proportion to the scope of the activities, university hospitals' need and the financial risk to the association organising the activities.

1.4 Conclusions: the impact chain, the evidence and the practical applicability

Table 3. The impact chain: Healthcare clowning for child patients

Background	The Finnish Hospital Clowns Association, which was established in 2001, facilitates professional and regular clown activities in all of Finland's university hospitals and in many central hospitals. Hospitals see clown work as part of the provision of satisfactory care, and cooperation with medical staff is very advanced. Clowns support children in hospitals, bringing happiness and joy to situations that involve stressful or restrictive factors. Healthcare clowns carry out the duty hospitals have to ensure a good patient experience. Healthcare clown work guarantees art experiences even for children and young people in hospital care, and is thus promoting the realisation of equality.
Aim	The aim of healthcare clowning is to influence the hospital experience of the child and the family and the memory that it leaves. The main objectives of the activities are: improving the mood of children and families, committing the child to treatment measures, and improving the child's patient experience.
Target group	Paediatric patients in hospital care (aged 0–18 years) and their families. Easily applicable to different age and special groups.
Method	The method is clowning applied to the hospital environment. The method is based on improvisation, encounters through interaction and cultivating the encounter into shared play. Healthcare clown work includes preparatory work for procedures and tours in wards and outpatient clinics.
Performance evaluation	Performance indicators include a medical staff survey, effectiveness data collected by clowns, feedback collected from families and encounter statistics.
Results and impacts	Research evidence on healthcare clown activities has been collected both in Finland and abroad. According to a study conducted in Finland (Karisalmi, N. et al. 2020),

	healthcare clowns have a positive impact on the patient experiences of children and families. Based on the medical staff survey, 94% of the respondents agreed that children laugh and relax in the presence of healthcare clowns.
Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness	Healthcare clowning increases the well-being of families, improves patient experiences, alleviates anxieties and fears, streamlines procedures and lightens the atmosphere in the wards. Cost-effectiveness has not been studied separately.
Ethics	The association has drawn up ten-point ethical principles to ensure the quality and professional grade of the healthcare clown work carried out by the association's clowns without limiting the artists' creativity.
Resources and estimated costs	The estimated total cost is € 800,000/year.
Further development	The goal is to make clown work a more integral part of various treatment measures and to increase the presence of clowns in hospitals. Healthcare clowns may support nursing work in new roles. In Israel, for example, clowns from the healthcare clown organisation Dream Doctors are involved in 40 different types of procedures (see the Dream Doctors). Funding for healthcare clown activities should be developed and an established funding model should be determined in order to enable the long-term development of the activities.

Table 4. The evidence: Healthcare clowning for child patients

<p>Scientific knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Current state *Number of studies *Methods *Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness *Consistency of results *Other scientific knowledge supporting the EBP 	<p>There is plenty of international and national research evidence on the impact of healthcare clown activities on children and their families, and the results of the studies are similar to each other. Several studies have examined the effectiveness of the practice on paediatric patients, parents and medical staff. The studies have utilised many different methods. Studies have shown that art affects well-being, but no individual study can offer unambiguous answers on how or why art has such an effect because these are complex phenomena dependent on individual experience. Healthcare clowns have a positive impact on productivity and may produce cost savings during certain procedures, such as imaging and radiation therapy. The cost-effectiveness of healthcare clown activities has been studied little. Further studies are still needed. The majority of the results of international studies can be applied to Finland. All associations operating under the European umbrella organisation Efhco meet the umbrella organisation's quality standards.</p>
<p>Expert knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Current state *Methods *Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness *Consistency of results 	<p>Expert knowledge shows that clown activities are accessible and that they provide happiness and support children and their families in stressful situations. Expert knowledge is collected and monitored regularly through effectiveness data collected by clowns and hospital-specific encounter statistics.</p> <p>Expert knowledge includes experiences that preoperational clowning can facilitate and speed up intervention situations, alleviate pain and help children calm down. Expert knowledge cannot offer systematic evidence of the cost-effectiveness of the practice. However, the collected expert knowledge suggests that the activities may</p>

	also have positive effect on costs. The expert knowledge is based on the healthcare clown activities carried out in Finland, so the effectiveness information can be directly applied to Finland.
<p>Experience-based knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Current state *Methods *Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness *Consistency of experience-based knowledge 	<p>Experience-based data on healthcare clowning is regularly collected through a medical staff survey and ongoing family feedback surveys.</p> <p>Based on the feedback of the families, healthcare clowns have improved the moods of families, promoted a playful atmosphere in the ward and helped procedures run smoothly. The results of the medical staff survey show strong evidence that in their work, medical staff see the benefits of clown activities and their significance to the patient's well-being. Medical staff have observed the positive effects of healthcare clowns during procedures. The results directly demonstrate the impact the activities have on children and families. The results obtained using different feedback collection methods are very consistent and there are no significant hospital-specific differences.</p>

Table 5. The practical applicability: Healthcare clowning for child patients

Need for the practice in Finland	Healthcare clowning carries out the duty hospitals have to ensure a good patient experience. Healthcare clown work is appreciated in university hospitals, and it is part of the hospital's activities and the satisfactory care provided there.
Existing structures for the practice in Finland	In Finland, healthcare clowning is enabled by Sairaalaklovnit ry, which has created a functional service structure for national clown activities. Cooperation with university hospitals and central hospitals is a smooth and long-term project, and healthcare clown activities can be seen as part of the hospital service structure. The greatest structural challenge of the practice lies in its funding.
Availability of education in Finland	Sairaalaklovnit ry trains new healthcare clowns and regularly offers the association's artists further education. The association sells interaction, well-being at work and performance training to parties external to the association.
Applicability to different target groups	Healthcare clowning is already carried out among several special groups (e.g. children on the autism spectrum, persons with intellectual disabilities, immigrants, elderly people with memory disorders). The practice can be applied to target groups of different ages and those in need of special support.
Communications and dissemination of the practice	The association's communications are based on the association's values and serve the association's objectives. The purpose of internal communications is to enable a smooth flow of up-to-date information and open dialogue. The task of external communications is to support fundraising, raise awareness of clown activities and create an image of a professional organisation.
Risks in the practical applicability of the practice	The risks of healthcare clowning include possible prejudices of medical staff, hospital bureaucracy, the turnover of medical staff, the short-term nature of the activities' funding, taking patient safety into account in all situations and the clowns' coping at work.

Applicability to municipalities and regions	Healthcare clowning promotes the well-being of children and families and improves patient experiences. Healthcare clown activities carry out the statutory duty of municipalities to promote equal access to and diverse use of culture and art and to promote culture and art as part of residents' well-being and health, inclusion and communality, as well as local and regional vitality (Act on Cultural Activities in Local Government 166/2019).
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Website and social media

Website of Sairaalaklovnit ry: www.sairaalaklovnit.fi

International website: www.efhco.eu (The European Federation of Healthcare Clown Organizations umbrella organisation, of which Sairaalaklovnit ry is a quality certified member)

Facebook: Sairaalaklovnit, www.facebook.com/sairaalaklovnit

Instagram: @Sairaalaklovnit, www.instagram.com/sairaalaklovnit

TikTok: @sairaalaklovnit, www.tiktok.com/@sairaalaklovnit

Blog: <https://blogi.sairaalaklovnit.fi>

Legislation

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Training materials

Sairaalaklovnit ry offers training on interaction, communication, listening skills, leadership, performance, trust, well-being at work and grouping – not to forget the play and joy typical of clowns. For more information on training, visit [Healthcare clowns website](#).

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2 PEER REVIEW OF THE HEALTHCARE CLOWNING FOR CHILD PATIENTS PRACTICE

Evaluation of the impact chain

Impact chain of the practice	Estimate	Score (1-5)
Aim	Healthcare clowns have set clear objectives for their operations. The objectives are realistic, innovative and credible. The set objectives support their operating model. The practice has been used for years in Finland and even longer abroad.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Background	Healthcare clowns operate in a consistent and goal-oriented manner. In this model, healthcare clowns are part of the treatment process and not separate actors. The background is researched knowledge and experience of the impacts of art on wellbeing.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Need	The definition of the need is clearly described for all the perspectives requested. The description clearly states that the medical staff does not have sufficient resources for anything other than the actual treatment measures, which means that healthcare clown activities improve the nursing experience.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Need from the health and well-being services perspective	The practice is based on the values of inclusion, equality and encounter. Clowning helps families participate in the hierarchical hospital world and its processes. This practice successfully makes culture and art available to all. It is important that long hospital stays can be eased by clowning.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Consistency of phases and methods	The method is already quite well established. Systematic evaluation (feedback) is carried out. There is reason to expand the activities (demand in hospitals) and this would also be a good method for encountering people with memory disorders, for example. There is need for further research.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor

Measurement and monitoring of effectiveness	Evaluation is continuous and systematic. The inclusion of scientific research strengthens the objective evaluation of the practice.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Appropriateness of the target group	The target group(s) are clearly described, and the significance of the different target groups for the wider picture is well reflected in the description. The target group(s) contribute to implementation and evaluation and play a key role in instilling the practice. The target group receives positive experiences in their hospital visits.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Appropriateness of experts and stakeholders	The role of experts and stakeholders is to increase public awareness of the practice and its effectiveness, for example through research. More research data is needed and will be available once cooperation is started with educational institutions. As a result, healthcare clowns can be instilled in several more sectors. The management of university hospitals supports the activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Short-term effectiveness	Clowning has brought joy, laughter and permission to be silly to hospital wards. For example, fits of laughter in the waiting room were not part of our earlier activities. Children's spontaneous joy and relief are a short-term result. Well-timed directing of resources would serve the target group better. Cooperation with medical staff should be intensified.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Long-term effectiveness	Long-term effectiveness clearly exists, as the activities have been going on for a long time. The description presents figures on impressive operating volumes. Effectiveness has been evaluated through various surveys and studies. Hopefully, the effectiveness of the practice can also be evaluated by an external reviewer and by using scientific methods in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Cost-effectiveness	Factors indicating cost-effectiveness have been observed, but there are no detailed calculations on the effect on costs. The practice is psychosocial support. If the child can be examined and treated without feeling forced and having several adults hold them, the result is excellent. It's difficult to evaluate the monetary value of something like this.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor

	Fear/terror of the physician and procedure can traumatise the child for a long time.	
Ethics	The values of healthcare clowns correspond to the hospital world and are subject to hospital rules. The privacy of children and families is well taken into account and their wishes are respected. Factors affecting the artists' coping, work guidance and risks have also been identified well.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Management and administration	Management and administration are described in a comprehensive and transparent manner. Management, planning, organisation and coordination have been described and the persons responsible have been appointed. The activities are smooth and structured.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Communication	The practice is established and information on it has been communicated extensively both internationally and nationally. The practice's described internal and external communications support its dissemination. Expert networks, research networks and networks of experts by experience support the dissemination of the practice. Several different channels are used in communications. Resources restrict 'marketing', these resources cannot be used to expand operations.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Risks	The risks have been identified and described in detail. The instructions and conditions provided by health care professionals are obeyed. The sensitivities of children and families have also been identified. The coping and work guidance of healthcare clowns have also been taken into account.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Resources, budget, funding and liabilities	The activities are clearly professional and require basic training in arts and special knowledge of the hospital environment as well as clear agreements with hospital management and the work unit. Administration, finances, management and communications are also handled professionally. The resources are described comprehensively and in sufficient detail.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor

Further development	Further development of the practice has been described. It is customer-oriented and emphasises cooperation with the staff. Demand for healthcare clowns has increased. At the same time, healthcare clowns strive to meet growing the need. The strengths lie in a solid 20-year experience of the hospital world.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Consistency of the practice	The practice has spread to the national level, is internationally well-known and has established itself as part of health care. There is research data on effectiveness, and new studies are underway.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Overall evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the impact chain	The strengths and weaknesses are presented in a structured manner. The fact that hospitals do not have sufficient access to the activities could be considered a weakness. The greatest challenge is to organise a stable funding model. Establishing it would help with longer-term planning and implementation. There is need for further scientific evidence on cost-effectiveness.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor

Evaluation of the evidence-based knowledge

II Evidence of the practice	Evaluation	Score (1-5)
Quality and quantity of evidence-based knowledge: a) In Finland	Evidence of the impacts of the practice has been collected systematically and extensively. However, more scientific research is needed on the effectiveness of the practice.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
b) in Europe	Information is collected systematically in Europe using different surveys and scientific research methods. In particular, there is a lack of research on cost-effectiveness.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor <input type="checkbox"/> 0 does not apply to the practice in question
c) Outside Europe	The material provided mainly presents European evidence through the European cooperation organisation. WHO's report has assessed the welfare impacts of culture in general, which is also applicable to healthcare clowns.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor <input type="checkbox"/> 0 does not apply to the practice in question
Evidence on effectiveness and cost-effectiveness based on experiential knowledge -the practical benefits of the practice -evidence produced by the target group -examples of evidence based on experiential knowledge	Experiential knowledge has been collected systematically and described extensively. Evidence based on experiential knowledge supports the effectiveness of the practice. Feedback from children, families and staff is particularly positive. More evidence is needed on cost-effectiveness.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Evidence on effectiveness and cost-effectiveness based on expert knowledge -the practical benefits of the practice -evidence produced by experts -the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of evidence-based expert knowledge	Evidence-based expert knowledge has been described from different perspectives: experts representing the target group have compiled a collection of articles describing the evidence. The experts involved in the activities have themselves collected statistics on the activities and their results. Cost-effectiveness has been studied little.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor

<p>Evidence-based scientific knowledge -the scientific nature of the practice -the quality, quantity and methods of the research evidence -research evidence on effectiveness and cost-effectiveness</p>	<p>Evidence-based scientific knowledge has been well described. There is little scientific research at national level, but there are plans to increase it.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor</p>
<p>Applicability of results in Finland</p>	<p>The results are applicable based on large amounts of experience and expert knowledge. More research data is needed and research is planned to be carried out in cooperation with different parties.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor</p>
<p>Overall evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence-based knowledge on the practice</p>	<p>An important child-oriented practice. Cost-effectiveness is difficult to prove – because the child's joy, relief and relaxation can be seen but are difficult to put a price to. There is plenty of data from experts and experts by experience. There is less scientific research data, but the lack has been acknowledged and research is being planned.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor</p>

Evaluation of the practical applicability

III Practical applicability	Evaluation	Score (1-5)
Need and applicability in Finland	The practice is very much needed in Finland (as well). Activities in children's hospitals have already become established. As the organisation of health care is divided between different actors, the practice is ideal for both the existing operating environment and the operating environment brought about by the health and social services reform. The need will increase in the future.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Need for the practice and its applicability to different target groups	There is a great need for the practice and it is ideal for its various target groups. Clown activities can be targeted at people of all ages and different target groups. There is experience of working with older people, for example. The clowns are able to take into account the different limitations and needs of different target groups.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Suitability of infrastructure for the use of the practice in Finland	The existing infrastructure is very well-suited for the use of the practice in Finland. The practice is based on encounters and adapts to change. The uncertainty of funding is a real risk for the activities, but it has not been visible in the activities. The practice is not limited by infrastructure but resources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Training and availability	In practice, the training involved in the practice is based on the transfer of knowledge and skills from one clown to another. However, there is a potential need for further training. The training is carried out by and the responsibility of Sairaalaklovnit ry. It is difficult to assess how available the training is to people not involved in the association's activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor
Importance of the practice for municipalities and wellbeing services counties	The introduction of the practice into use provides excellent support for health and well-being activities implemented in municipalities and regions and promotes the health and well-being of the target group and the entire population. Availability is better in areas with university hospitals.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor

<p>Distribution of the practice:</p> <p>a) In Finland</p>	<p>The practice is widely used throughout Finland. The model has been in use for 20 years, and the activities have been continuously developed and expanded to different health care sectors. Inequality in availability – better available in areas with university hospitals.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor</p>
<p>b) in Europe</p>	<p>Experience and cooperation with European healthcare clown organisations has shown that healthcare clown work is carried out in a similar way regardless of the country or organisation. The practice is widely used across Europe. Effectiveness has been studied extensively.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor <input type="checkbox"/> 0 does not apply to the practice in question</p>
<p>c) Outside Europe</p>	<p>The practice originates from the United States, where it has also been studied the most.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor <input type="checkbox"/> 0 does not apply to the practice in question</p>
<p>Other comments on the practical applicability of the practice</p>	<p>Expanding the activities to become part of the regular activities of central hospitals would guarantee patient equality better than the current system. Healthcare clowning lowers the threshold for seeking hospital treatment. It has long-term significance. It also blurs the barrier between performance arts, culture and health services.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor</p>
<p>Overall evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the practical applicability of the practice</p>	<p>The practice is ideal for practical use. Healthcare clown activities have become an important part of the activities of university hospitals. Healthcare clowning is an activity that creates positive patient experiences, promotes hospital comfort and provides psychosocial support in hospitals. The activities are well-established and national. The expansion of operations would be easy to implement if resource allocation was secure.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor</p>

Overall evaluation

Overall evaluation	Score (1-5)
<p>Excellent and established child-centred activities. Healthcare clowning for child patients is an international activity and its impacts are largely recognised. The aim of the activities is to provide joy for children in stressful situations.</p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 excellent <input type="checkbox"/> 4 very good <input type="checkbox"/> 3 good <input type="checkbox"/> 2 fair <input type="checkbox"/> 1 poor </p>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Strategy

 <p>SAIRAALA KLONIT sjukhusclowner</p>	<p>Equal encounter art, responsible art activities & the anarchy of clown play!</p>
<p>To promote and maintain clown activities in situations with stressful factors and a need for special support.</p>	
<p>Three main values:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Play Hospital clowning is the art of encountering another person through play. Hospital clowns encourage and foster all kinds of play. The nature of clown play includes unlimited imagination and anarchy. 2. Equality In their activities, hospital clowns commit to equality and non-discrimination, both as organizations and individuals. Hospital clowns meet each person as an individual and respect diversity. Hospital clowns challenge their own prejudices and privileges and commit to continuous discussion about values in their work and work environment. 3. Responsibility Sairaalklovnit ry operates in the hospital environment in a responsible manner, bringing professional clown artists to the hospital. Sairaalklovnit ry is a responsible employer. Vocational education and development at work are part of responsible clown work. 	
<p>Description of operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved mood for children and families. The child commit to treatment measures. The child's patient experience improves. 	
<p>Main objective:</p> <p>Enabling nationally accessible hospital clown activities & developing and expanding the forms of work</p>	
<p>Sub-objective A:</p> <p>Hospital-specific accessibility: an accommodating working day structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deepening cooperation with medical staff: hospital clowns as part of the work community Flexible opportunities to develop the content and structure of working days Responding to hospital service requests 	
<p>Sub-objective B:</p> <p>Developing research cooperation and the feedback system to measure the impact of clown work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning the collection and utilization of effectiveness data (the Artzi project) New studies 	
<p>Sub-objective C:</p> <p>Increasing the occupational well-being of clowns through the organisation of work and the implementation of clown support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and increasing the permanent employment of monthly salaried clowns Establishment and further development of clown support Regular job satisfaction surveys 	
<p>Sub-objective D:</p> <p>Development of new hospital clown services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new services stem from the value base of hospital clowns, i.e. the values of hospital clowns determine them. The status of the new services will be proportioned to the basic function/main objective. Creating the conditions under which the new services can be tested and developed without any harm to basic operations. Specifying a price list for the services; the new services will become a new source of income for the basic activities. 	
<p>Sub-objective E:</p> <p>Strengthening the national service structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The social welfare and health care sector will be made aware of the possibility of acquiring clown work for different target groups. Models will be created to enable social welfare and health care actors to combine their efforts to share costs, for example in small localities Our own communications will highlight our strengths: nation-wide reach, permanent base, well-being of artists (permanence of work and well-being at work) 	
<p><i>We offer high-quality and internationally respected hospital clowning for children and young people in Finnish hospitals, taking national accessibility into account. We work in close and constantly developing cooperation with medical staff offering a clown as part of the patient care team to support the child during treatment measures. We work in close international cooperation and specialise in preoperative clowning and psychiatric treatment. Medical and nursing science research cooperation on the significance and benefits of clown activities offers interesting new perspectives on our activities. We exert our influence as an established arts actor in the field of well-being services and an innovative expert that is part of social welfare and health care with an established funding model.</i></p>	

Appendix 2

Annual meeting of the association	
Association's board of directors & employee representative	
<p>Executive Director, Artistic Director (Kari Jägi)</p> <p>Financial management, HR, hospital contracts, association matters, ensuring artistic quality & contents of clown support. Efficacy cooperation, clown selections and recruitment of clowns if necessary, cooperation with other clown operators, supervisor's tasks, head of occupational health and safety</p> <p>Purchasing: Accounting and payroll Purchasing: IT support Pro bono: Lawyers' services</p>	<p>Fundraising Director (Aino Viertola)</p> <p>Fundraising forecast & follow-up. Stea & foundations & funds (application & investigation), fundraising of private individuals, business cooperation & sponsorship, contact information register maintenance, newsletter, external communications, online sales including mouse sales, purchase and sales involving printed products, development and updating of home pages, office on-call services</p> <p>Purchasing: Fundraising schemes Purchasing: IT support</p>
<p>Project Coordinator (Naaja Laine)</p> <p>Project fund application, project organisation and reporting, Clowixus 2022-2023 project management, effectiveness evaluation & coordination of research cooperation.</p> <p>Administration 50%, Hospital clown work 50%</p>	<p>Communications Coordinator (Elina Reinikka)</p> <p>External communication/social media: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, video content, video and digital content development, Clowixus project communication, clown image bank maintenance, internal communications tasks. Clowixus project clown artist.</p> <p>Administration 44%, Hospital clown work 56%</p>
<p>Clowns in charge (Kaisa Koulu, Katja Lehtola, Joonas Lindberg, Tanjalotta Raitikk, Elina Selamo)</p> <p>Local development of activities, internal communications within the hospital, ward meetings, shifts, organisation of urban meetings, team work, promotion of research cooperation in hospitals, clown work</p> <p>Katja Lehtola & Elina Selamo: Clowixus project clowns Tanjalotta Raitikka: Trust and occupational safety and health</p>	<p>Fundraising Coordinator (Markus Kaustell)</p> <p>Fundraising development project (hospital), corporate cooperation & sponsorship, development of local fundraising, development of training products, sales of jobs, Lime CRM review</p> <p>Administration 60%, Hospital clown work 40%</p>
<p>Clowns</p> <p>Permanent employment: Hanna Gibson, Janna Haavisto, Petri Mäkipää, Kaisa Ritola, Dan Söderholm, Pia Tapio</p> <p>Framework agreement: Mikael Andersson, Karoliina Blom, Petri Ervasti, Kimmo Hirvenmäki, Tatja Hirvenmäki, Pavi Kangasniemi, Aarni Kuivenen, Taina Mäki-Iso, Markus Petsalo, Kaisa Päivölä, Anna Ranta.</p> <p>Clown work, taking care of their own clown appearance and equipment, city-specific development work as a member of the city team</p> <p>Janna Haavisto: Clowixus project clown artist Pia Tapio: Jorvi's clown in charge Kimmo Hirvenmäki, Taina Mäki-Iso: Coaching Dan Söderholm: Clowixus artistic coordination, coach</p>	

Appendix 3

PRELIMINARY BUDGET FOR 2022

EXPENSES	Year 2022	Budgeted in 2021	Actual in 2020
Personnel costs (clowns)			
Clown salaries (incl. holiday pay)	-470 000,00 €	-460 000,00 €	-371 865,19 €
Monthly salaries	-390 000,00 €	-365 000,00 €	-164 917,58 €
Salaries (Framework Agreement)	-80 000,00 €	-95 000,00 €	-206 947,61 €
Indirect clown salary expenses	-118 000,00 €	-102 000,00 €	-65 159,20 €
Total amount	-588 000,00 €	-562 000,00 €	-437 024,39 €
Other clowning costs			
Clown accessories	-3 500,00 €	-3 500,00 €	-2 416,90 €
Education expenditure, well-being at work, Clown Support costs	-15 000,00 €	-16 000,00 €	-10 602,25 €
Other ClownNexus project costs (training, printed matter)	-15 000,00 €	-30 000,00 €	0,00 €
ClownNexus project travel expenses including daily allowances	-15 000,00 €	-14 000,00 €	0,00 €
Travel expenses & daily allowances	-17 000,00 €	-15 000,00 €	-11 438,00 €
Costs of the clown app project	-24 000,00 €	-40 000,00 €	0,00 €
Total amount	-89 500,00 €	-118 500,00 €	-24 455,15 €
Personnel costs (administration)			
Administrative salaries (incl. holiday pay)	-213 000,00 €	-200 000,00 €	-155 268,01 €
Indirect administrative salary expenses	-49 000,00 €	-45 000,00 €	-27 265,19 €
Total amount	-262 000,00 €	-245 000,00 €	-182 531,20 €
Other administrative expenses			
IT equipment, services and software costs	-23 000,00 €	-10 000,00 €	-18 740,07 €
Rents of premises	-7 000,00 €	-6 500,00 €	-5 130,24 €
Postage	-700,00 €	-700,00 €	-584,22 €
Office expenses	-5 500,00 €	-5 000,00 €	-7 198,46 €
Occupational health care	-15 000,00 €	-8 000,00 €	-7 922,68 €
Meeting expenses and fees	-6 000,00 €	-1 000,00 €	-1 388,58 €
Financial administration services	-25 000,00 €	-25 000,00 €	-24 964,83 €
Membership fees	-3 500,00 €	-3 500,00 €	-3 078,00 €
Telephone and network traffic costs	-9 500,00 €	-7 000,00 €	-8 903,04 €
Financial charges	-2 200,00 €	-2 000,00 €	-1 913,89 €
Insurance	-2 000,00 €	-2 000,00 €	-758,68 €
Advertising and marketing costs	-3 000,00 €	-4 000,00 €	-3 521,32 €
Expenditure on fundraising	-15 000,00 €	-19 000,00 €	-8 970,67 €
Other operating expenses	-3 300,00 €	-500,00 €	-276,32 €
Total amount	-120 700,00 €	-84 200,00 €	-93 342,98 €
TOTAL EXPENSES	-1 060 200,00 €	-1 019 700,00 €	-737 353,72 €
REVENUE			
Revenue from clown activities			
Hospital contributions & service sales	295 000,00 €	230 000,00 €	190 860,00 €
Activity-increasing grants for university hospital activities	128 000,00 €	137 532,00 €	111 845,00 €
Projects (in 2022, the ClownNexus EU project, the clown app project)	125 000,00 €	150 000,00 €	12 500,00 €
Total amount	548 000,00 €	517 532,00 €	315 205,00 €
Fundraising			
Membership fee revenue	200,00 €	200,00 €	200,00 €
Donations, private (individuals & groups)	80 500,00 €	89 000,00 €	136 070,72 €
Donations, companies	125 000,00 €	130 000,00 €	52 258,85 €
Other fundraising & sales of support products	2 500,00 €	1 000,00 €	1 018,35 €
Total amount	208 200,00 €	220 200,00 €	189 545,92 €
General grants			
STEa grant	208 000,00 €	173 060,00 €	173 060,00 €
Other grants (foundations, funds)	100 000,00 €	95 000,00 €	211 139,29 €
Total amount	308 000,00 €	268 060,00 €	384 199,29 €
TOTAL REVENUE	1 060 200,00 €	1 005 792,00 €	888 950,21 €

The preliminary budget for 2022 was approved at the meeting of the Sairaalaklounit ry Board of Directors on 22 September 2021.