

**Finnish Institutions Follow-up Report**  
**Maternity and Child Care Clinics in Finland**  
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**Summary of New Perspectives Featured in The Paper**

My Finnish Institutions research paper dealt with a unique feature of the Finnish health care system; the free-of-charge maternity and child care clinics. I chose this topic precisely because of the uniqueness of the system; it does not exist anywhere else in the world and is therefore unique. My research questions basically divided the whole paper into two distinct sections. The first question, and consequently section, was what are the practises and aims of Finnish maternity and child care clinics. The second question that was dealt with was what are the modern applications of these two clinics as Finnish society has changed.

To answer my first research question I went through the history of Finnish maternity and child care clinics. I then described the general practises of both clinics in chronological order, e.g. beginning from the time that a pregnant woman first visits a maternity clinic to the last visits that a five-year-old has to the child care clinics before starting school at the age of five. The contemporary issues I dealt with in my paper were single parenting, the focus on the early role of the father, the special needs of immigrant population and the latest development, an on-line net clinic where parents can look for information, ask questions or discuss issues with other parents or medical personnel.

**What to Do Differently**

The most obvious thing I would do differently if I had the chance to do this paper again would be to stay on schedule and finish the paper on time. Apart from thus gaining two extra credits, I feel that writing the paper over many months has been more difficult than doing it consistently over a short period of time. I had to go through the paper every time I started to rewrite it, simply because I could not remember what it was I had previously written.

I also believe that completing the paper on time would have given me time to consider doing some research of my own (see section below for ideas) whereas at this stage there was simply no time for any extra projects.

**Possible Topics for Further Study**

During the writing process I had quite a few ideas that could be added to the paper. One thing I had in mind was a comparison between the maternity and child care clinics of different Finnish municipalities. In modern day Finland each municipality gets to choose how much funding they give to both clinics, and which services they provide. I think it would be interesting to see which municipality offers the best service and which worst, possibly also try to figure out patterns as to why the services are good/bad. It would also be interesting to see if there are geographical differences, e.g. better service in northern Finland than in south, etc.

Another component which would add to the quality of the paper would be a personal interview of one, or preferably several, maternity and child care clinic workers. It would be interesting to see if they would identify the same challenges mentioned in the text books of the field. I am also sure they would have information on the current situation which has not yet made its way into books.

One more idea for research on the topic would be to see what the users of the clinics (probably parents rather than children) think of the system, what sort of pros and cons they feel are involved. This could prove to be rather difficult because of the highly personal and even emotional ties people have when it comes to the health care of their children. I for instance am familiar with a parent who thinks that the whole system is corrupt and a downright failure, because the public-health nurse suggested speech therapy for his four-year-old son.

### **Comparison with Other National Institutions**

I do not think that a direct equivalent to the Finnish maternity and child care clinics exists in any other culture. It would, of course, be possible to compare the Finnish system with e.g. the British or American maternity and child care systems, although personally I have no idea how these are organized. Of course, one relevant aspect of study would be to compare the health of Finnish children and babies to those of other nationalities and see if there is a difference. This, however, might be quite a heavy project, likely to be beyond the reach of a Finnish translation student.

I believe that as a part of the Finnish health care system, the knowledge of the practises of maternity and child care clinics is useful for a translator. As a unique system world-wide I believe internationally people are interested in the Finnish system, so you never know when you may have to explain it to people, or translate/interpret something having to do with these clinics.