

Health-enhancing Physical Activity of Municipalities

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The National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) has developed a nationwide benchmarking system for management, planning and evaluating of health promotion activities in different fields of action in Finnish municipalities. The key objective is to develop comparable indicators to describe the actions undertaken by municipalities in health promotion. The system, TEAvisari, covers sport and physical activity, primary health care, comprehensive schools and municipal management (<http://www.thl.fi/teaviisari>). With TEAvisari, municipalities can themselves monitor and develop the practices for promoting health-enhancing physical activity.

Since 2010, THL has biennially gathered data on the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity in municipalities. A data collection questionnaire on health-enhancing physical activity was sent to all Finnish municipalities. In 2012, 229 municipalities (68%) submitted their data and in 2010, 268 (79%). A purpose is to support the implementation of the measures that were provided for in the Government resolution on policies promoting sport and physical activity. In addition to the data collection, information on sports and exercise facilities was compiled from the national database (the LIPAS database, University of Jyväskylä) and financial data provided by Statistics Finland.

TEAvisari is based on a theoretical health promotion capacity building (HPCB) framework. The HPCB framework includes the following perspectives: the commitment of the organization, management, monitoring of physical activity and needs assessment, resources, participation and other core activities. The promotion of health-enhancing physical activity within the activities undertaken by municipalities was operationalized for example as participation in the welfare reporting, intersectional co-operation, fee policy of sports and exercise facilities and organizing activities and counselling for special groups.

According to the results large and small municipalities differ significantly from each other in many respects. However recent findings indicate that the activity of municipalities measured by the HPCB framework is associated with residents' physical activity (Nummela et al., 2014).

Key words: health promotion capacity building, health-enhancing physical activity