Citizens participating in their healthcare – challenges for nurses

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Growing use of digital technology demands have caused a need for nursing to strengthen the knowledge, skills and competences related to digital health and find out its versatile roles. Recently the Finnish National Agency for Education launched the first results of the National Forum for Skills Anticipation's anticipation work and Competences in the Future 2035 for both healthcare professionals and citizens. Furthermore, the report discusses the challenges facing continuous learning. A three-level classification of qualifications is used. The future skills needs are categorized as follows
generic skills, common working life skills and skills specific to vocational fields e.g. healthcare. In the future, meta-skills that enhance the management of change will be growingly essential. Such meta-skills are problem solving skills, self-regulation, the ability to learn, development and management of personal competence, and information evaluation skills. The importance of skills related to virtual future, such as the ability to utilise digital solutions and platforms, will increase more and more.

Today Finnish citizens' participation is both encouraged and strengthened by means of national archives of health data and a lot of different assessment tools of health and well-being. Citizens are increasingly using web-portals, emailing and social media, and they have access to comprehensive self-analysis tools that will make them partners that are more active during their care and treatment. Data networks allow the healthcare staff, e.g. to be actively present in citizen's lives 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. The nurse supports and guides citizens to take responsibilities in their own functional capacity, both in care units and outside them.

Digital health services are a part of every nurse's ordinary work. The nurse's role is to take care of citizens, to search for qualified health information, use the information, and understand the importance of information both for a citizen's/patient's self-care and in nursing care. The nurse acts as the clients' partner, offers them appropriate digital health services, encourages, and supports the use of digital services. Nurses utilise in nursing the data and knowledge that citizens and their families produce themselves and which is available in different information systems and in national archiving services. Safe using social media and other communication technology tools in nursing requires that the nurse understands the differences between private and professional roles. The ethical issues are of great importance.