



What makes the work in home care stressful – too many clients, low care continuity, work organization or interruptions?

Timo Sinervo, Visa Väisänen, Laura Corneliusson, Salla Ruotsalainen,
Tiina Pesonen and Anja Noro

**Finnish Institute for Health and
Welfare**

Changes in the service system of older people

- Policy to move from institutional care to home care
- Two major forms of care:
 - Home care (home help services and home nursing merged)
 - Assisted living with 24/7 service
 - A form of care between these missing?
- Practically no institutional care as long-term care any more
- Staffing level regulated in law in assisted living with 24/7 (0,6, rising to 0,7, but shortage of personnel may mean delay)
- Shortage of work force, sickness absence and disability pension at high levels among practical nurses (largest group)
- Home care has become the most stressful place to work
 - Earlier institutional care was most stressful

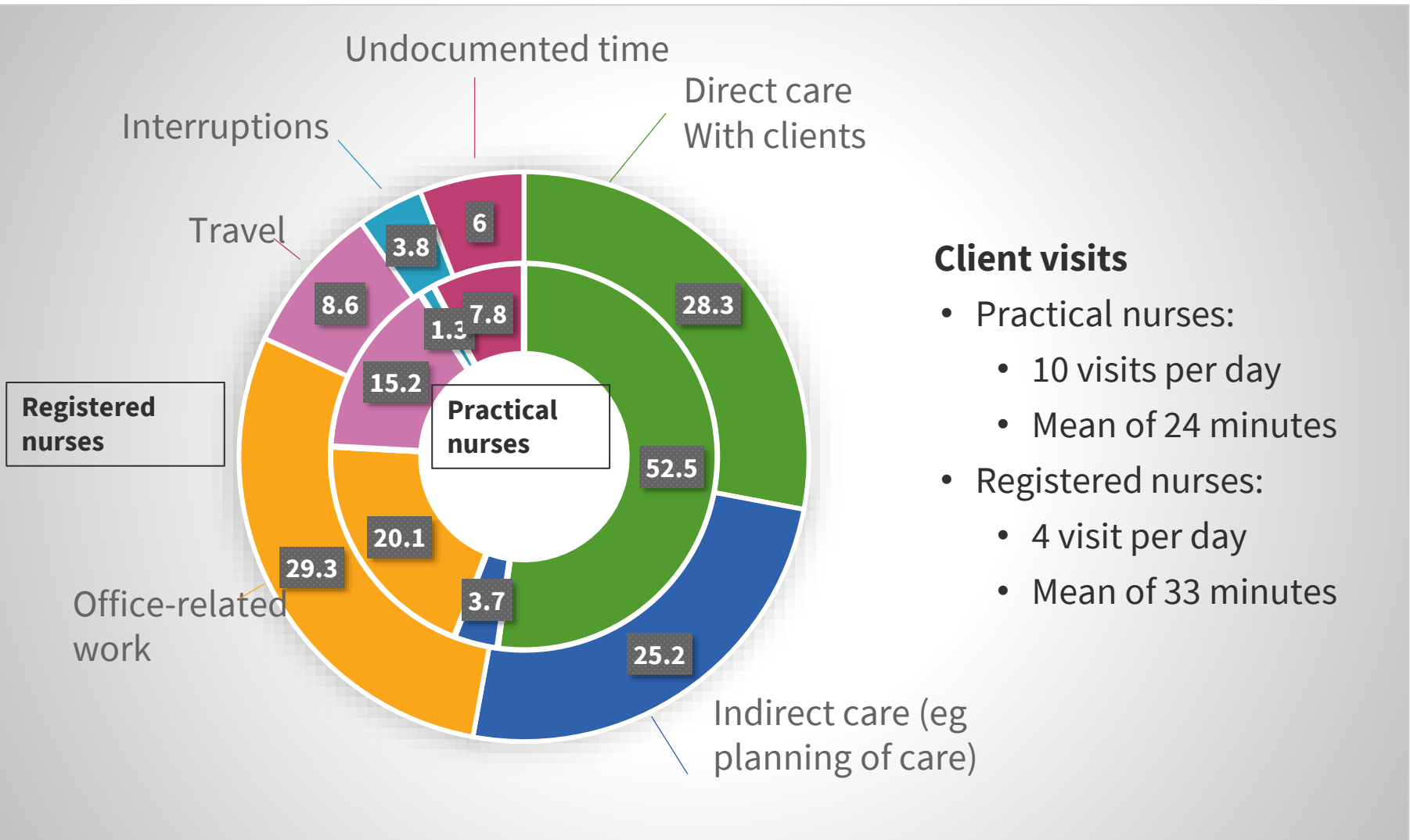
What is known of stress and job satisfaction in home care

- Contradictory development
 - Demands for higher efficiency
 - Larger proportion of work day to direct care (aim at 60%)
 - Enterprise resource planning systems
 - Efficient production system, assembly line? Time pressure
 - Increasing interest on Buurtzorg system
 - Self-organized team work, more autonomy (Karasek), smaller teams, familiar clients, familiar employees, care continuity
- Time pressure caused by low resources very harmful (Elovainio et al 2015), what is the role of work organization
- What is the role of the functioning of clients?
- What is the role of work day structure (direct care time, breaks, interruptions)

Methods

- Work time allocation study (including small survey)
 - For 7 days, all employees in home care units recorded their client visits, what they did at the client's home, and other tasks in working hours
 - Small voluntary survey on working conditions, stress, job satisfaction, time pressure
- RAI-assessments (Resident Assessment System) of clients in the work units: need for care (such as ADL, cognition..)
- Questionnaire to managers of work units
- 17 work units, 30 teams, 423 employees, 1477 clients
- Information of employees' stress, mean of the service needs of their clients (ADL, cognition), information of their work day (direct care time, breaks, ..), team autonomy

Work-time allocation in home care

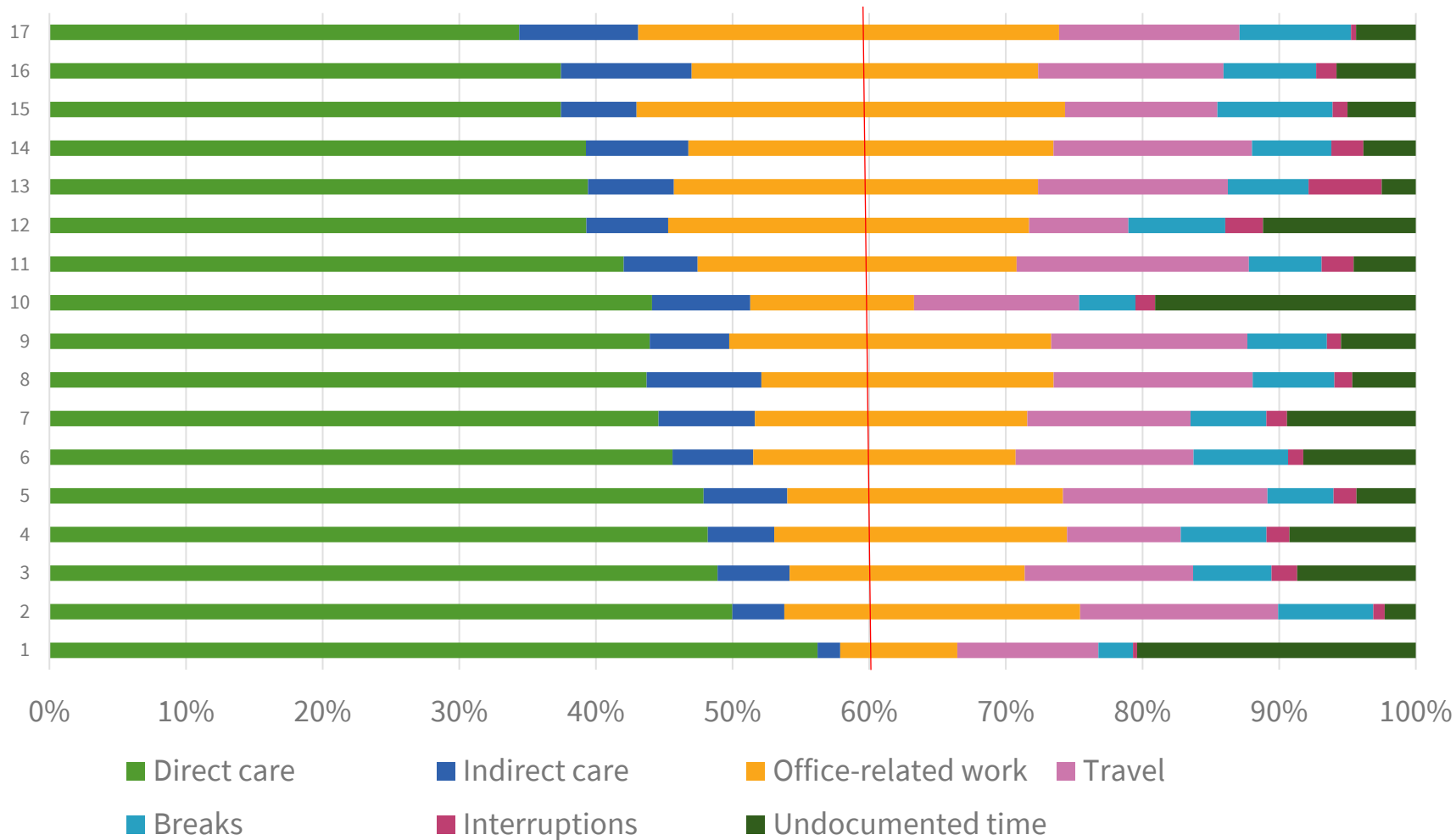


Client visits

- Practical nurses:
 - 10 visits per day
 - Mean of 24 minutes
- Registered nurses:
 - 4 visit per day
 - Mean of 33 minutes

Work-time allocation in the work units

Unofficial goal of direct care

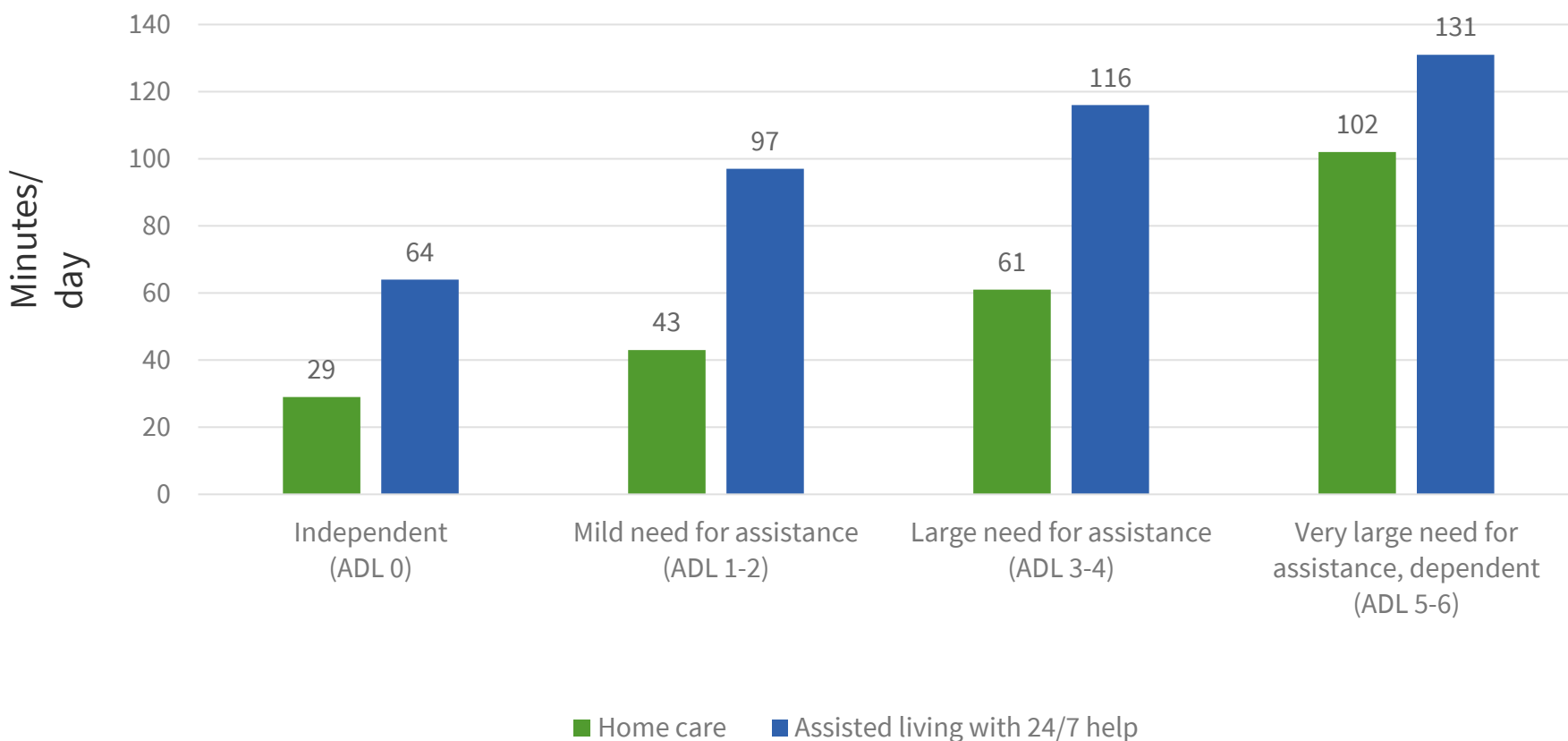


Visit per day by clients

Mean of visits per day	Home care clients % (number)	Daily time for direct care per client (mean min/day)	Separate employees per week (mean number/week)
Less than 1 per day	46 % (n=679)	17,1 min	2,5
1-2 per day	41 % (n=602)	43,6 min	6,5
3 per day	11 % (n=160)	79,6 min	9,4
4 or over per day	2 % (n=36)	136,5 min	12,0
In total	100 % (n=1477)	37,6 min	5,1

More than 12 separate employees (plus meal service and cleaning employees) means that care continuity is not at acceptable level

Direct care time for client in relation to physical functioning (ADL-H activities in daily living)



Linear regression models of time pressure, job satisfaction and stress

	Time pressure		Job satisfaction		Stress	
	Stand. Beta		Stand Beta		Stand Beta	
Reg.vs. pract. nurse	-0,023	-0,079	0,043	0,044	-0,279***	-0,197***
Functional status (Maple)	-0,077	-0,52	0,077	0,054	-0,16	-0,004
Direct care time (% of work day)	-0,206***	0,126*	-0,111	-0,071	0,251***	0,192***
Breaks (% of work day)	-0,141**	-0,95*	0,055	0,036	-0,049	-0,016
Unique clients per week	0,104	0,95	-,164**	-0,172**	0,052	0,037
Team autonomy	-0,110*	-0,107*	0,104*	0,117*	-0,025	-0,037
Interruptions		0,446***		-0,269***		0,408***
R ²	0,068	0,294	0,067	0,150	0,098	0,257

Stress of practical nurses higher

Discussion

- Clients' need for care not related to worker well-being
 - More information needed, for example of aggressive clients
- The amount of direct care time per day related to time pressure and stress
 - Not strongly related to job satisfaction
- Team autonomy and smaller number of unique clients may alleviate time pressure and increase job satisfaction
 - Especially among clients with high level of need for care number of separate clients may be too high → low care continuity
 - Increasing autonomy at team level → Buurtzorg model?
- Interruptions, when something breaks the planned schedule of the day, a major stressor
- Resources in home care too low, shortage of personnel
 - Resilience weak against interruptions



Have a nice autumn!

Contact: firstname.lastname@thl.fi

Twitter: @SinervoTimo