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Assessing the "Hyvis" Enquiry Service by Applying the Process Model of Information Management

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Background

- Use of the Internet has become more popular among health care users
- The Internet has also had an effect on the delivery of health care services ➔ services should be delivered by offering multiple entry paths into health care services
- New ways of accessing health services and information should be introduced: e.g. Hyvis Enquiry Service
- Technical interventions provide support, help and information to users
- Information and communication technology enhance the nurse -– patient relationship

Hyvis Portal & Enquiry Service

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- A free Internet -based service intended for inhabitants of the Etelä-Savo Hospital District
- An enquiry service for users to consult a health care professional is included in the Hyvis portal
  - Public forum
    - allows universal access to the information
  - Private forum
    - secure connection
    - only the person who asks the question can read the answer

Process Model of Information Management Applied to Health Care

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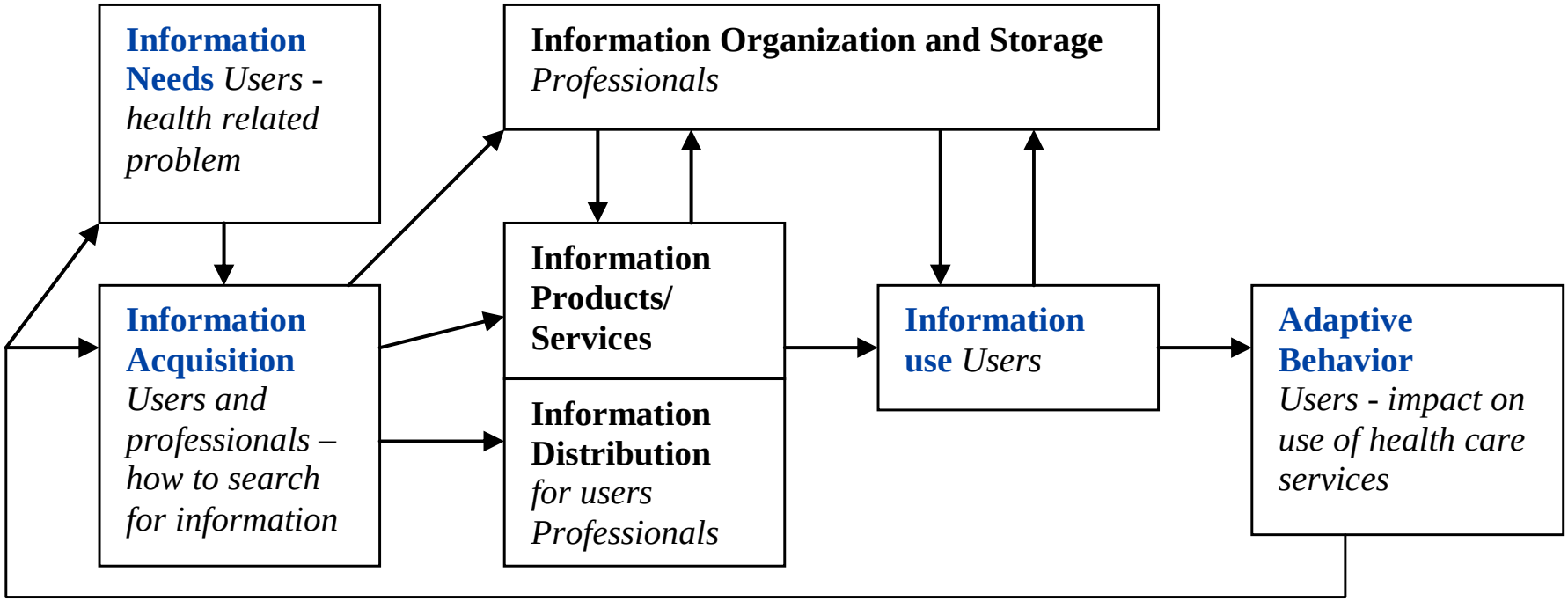

Modified from Choo 1998

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Research Questions

- How well the Hyvis Enquiry Service fulfils users' information needs?
- How the Hyvis Enquiry Service impacts on the use of health care services, by applying Choo's information management model?

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Methods

- A qualitative approach was used
- The data were collected through semi-structured interviews:
  - five users of the Hyvis Enquiry Service
  - all the nine health care professionals who answer users' questions via the Internet
- The data analysed by using inductive content analysis

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Results

Information needs

- The users expect to obtain reliable information
  - filtered by a health care professional
- The information is needed to support users' decision-making processes

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Results

Information acquisition

- Health care professionals use:
  - electronic databases and evidence based guidelines
  - own experience and tacit knowledge
- Users of the service search health-related information:
  - by using search engines such as Google
  - from reliable Internet pages such as Hyvis portal

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Results

Information use

- The users trust the information that is received from the service
- Some of the answers were presented too generally ➔ more specific answers were wished for
- Four of the five users obtained the required information

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Results

Adaptive behaviour of the users

- Completes health care services by offering easily available health related information
- Does not substantially reduce the use of health care services
- Has a positive effect on users' self-care habits, and assists users to take care of their health

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Conclusions

- The Hyvis Enquiry Service benefits some inhabitants
- Users usually obtain the information they need
- Identification of information needs is vital for the process
  - misunderstood questions
  - sometimes users fail to supply all the necessary background information
- The Enquiry Service seems not to be reducing the use of health care services at the moment
- A useful service model in the future for users who do not need urgent help

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