

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide. It features a large, light blue gear partially visible, overlapping a vertical bar. The bar is divided into three horizontal sections: a yellow top section, a grey middle section, and a light blue bottom section. The background of the slide is dark blue at the top and white below.

# **INFORMATION STEERING AS AN ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SERVICE PROVISION IN PUBLIC SECTOR**

Special Track: Shaping future success  
through innovation, intelligence and knowledge

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## Line of thought and today's agenda

- 1. Health services are knowledge-intensive services**
- 2. Health system is a complex and continuously evolving system**
- 3. In complex systems knowledge sharing and knowledge flows are crucial**
- 4. Information steering creates an enabling infrastructure for service provision and development**
  1. What is meant by “information steering”?
  2. What ideas could knowledge management offer for developing it?



## Once upon a time...

- “ [...] municipalities contracted general practitioners, midwives and public health nurses, usually providing them with facilities and accommodation. As the overall number of doctors was small, they had to handle a wide variety of health problems.” (Järvelin 2002)



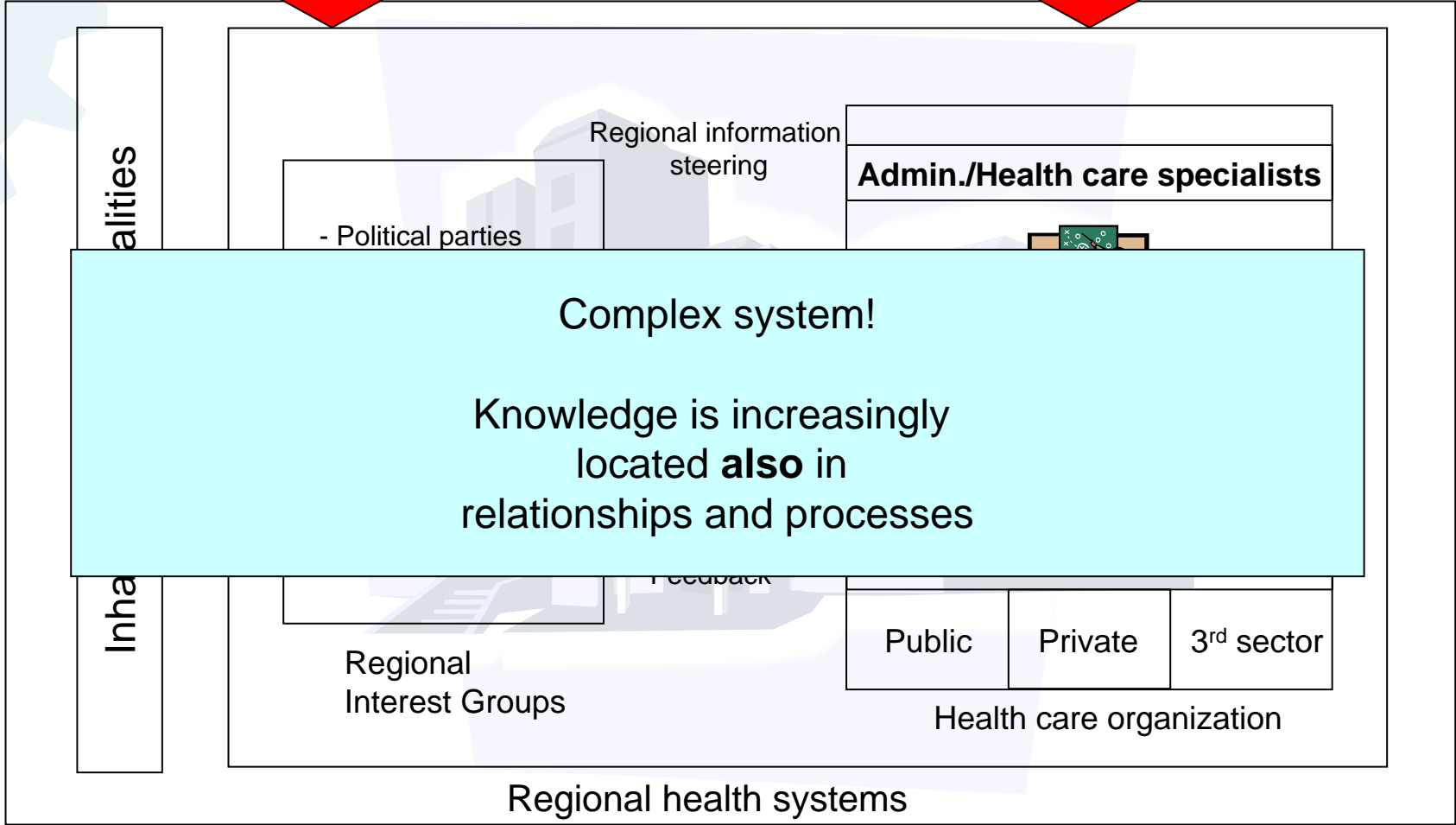
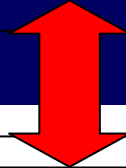
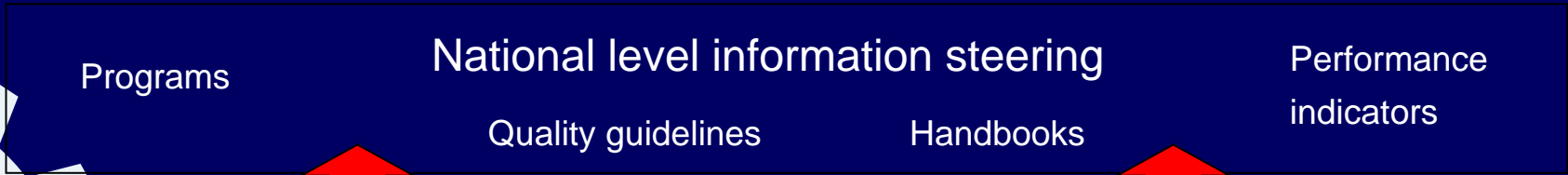
Pictures [http://yle.fi/akuutti/arkisto2008/290108\\_a.htm](http://yle.fi/akuutti/arkisto2008/290108_a.htm)



Fairly simple system!

Knowledge is located in  
expertise and experience





alities

Inha

**National health system**



# Knowledge flows of the health system

## Information steering



### Regional health system as a part of national health system

For example national level information steering, media relations, social influencing, policy guidelines



### Regional information steering

For example owners (municipalities), local media, customer feedback and other local interest groups



### Administrative knowledge flows at the regional level

For example HRM and financial administration



### Knowledge flows between patient (or relative) and health care specialist and knowledge flows between specialist groups

For example referrals, patient experiences and service chains

## Control information



## What is meant by “information steering”?

- Vedung and van der Doelen (1998): “government-directed attempts at **influencing people through transfer of knowledge**, communication of reasoned argument, and moral suasion in order to achieve a policy result”.
- Syväjärvi, Stenvall and Harisalo (2007): “the objective of information steering is **to provide information that helps service producers to develop their own operations**. Other objectives may be to increase expertise, to provide more general information, and to ensure the implementation of norm and resource steering and, more extensively, the public policy”.

From the viewpoint of municipalities?

Business Intelligence? Competitive Intelligence?



## In practice information steering refers to

- Best practices, recommendations, quality guidelines, handbooks, performance indicators, statistics, education, training, letters, reports, publications, research results, bulletins, newsletters, peer communication, seminars, development programs, policy guidelines and agendas, standards, etc.

Very diverse set of data, information and knowledge!

How to handle this information load?

How can KM help?



# What ideas KM offers for developing the effectiveness of information steering?

- Categorization based on
  - **Source?** national vs. regional level
  - **Target?** administrative vs. professional needs
  - **Content?** data/information/knowledge, explicit vs. tacit
- **Media or channel?** one way vs. two way, physical interplay vs. publication of notices



## Empirical data

- Qualitative data was collected in two phases.
- First, management group meetings in a Finnish municipal health care organisation were observed. Based on observations information steering was categorized into regional and national level steering. These two main categories were further analysed and divided into three subcategories.
- In the second phase, members of management group were interviewed. Purpose of these interviews was to find out what information and how employees with management responsibilities utilise in their decision making. Secondary purpose of the interviews was to develop and test the original typology.
- Together these two empirical phases pointed out what kind of information steering public health care organisations receive and through what kind of knowledge processes this information is shared and utilised.



## To conclude

1. Information steering provides an enabling infrastructure for service provision and development by:
  - linking administrative and operative levels of public health care
  - sharing expertise and experiences
  - enabling regional application of steering and innovations
  - bridging the gap between public and private actors
  
2. Categorization of information steering is needed because:
  - currently the concept of information steering refers to every possible form of information and this causes confusion
  - better directed information attains better results (does it?)

