

**SMALL INFANT CONTACTS OF FINNISH MEDICAL STUDENTS BEFORE THEIR CLINICAL PEDIATRIC COURSE****M. Valkama, M. Mäkelä***Pediatrics and Adolescence, Oulu University Hospital, Oulu, Finland*

In order to evaluate small infant experiences of medical students before their pediatric course a questionnaire was made in Oulu University Hospital.

227 out of the 241 (94,2 %) medical students participating clinical pediatric courses between the autumn 2004 and 2006 fulfilled questionnaire forms about their experiences. 32,6 % of students were male and 67,0 % female, and one (0,4%) unknown. 7,5 % of the answered students were the only offspring in their native families. The rest 96,5 % had one to 14 siblings. 18 students had own children.

Five students had never kept an infant in lap. 86(37,9 %) had never fed infants, 22(9,7 %) had given bottle feeding, and 117(51,5 %) of the students had given solid food.

4,4 % of the students hadn't dared to touch infants. 6,6 % felt it frightening to handle infants, and 40,1 % marked to feel tense to handle infants. 140 (61,7 %) thought they can manage with infants, and furthermore 58,6 % gave voice to waiting for permission to handle infants. Only 11,9 % acknowledged to be quite familiar with handling infants. 22,9 % had cared for their infant siblings, and 20,7 % had been working occasionally as a babysitter.

Almost all students had worked as a doctor before clinical pediatric courses. If they have had to care infants, they had felt themselves sensitive and careful, used self-studying and supervising possibilities. Almost a half of the students had consulted pediatricians.