

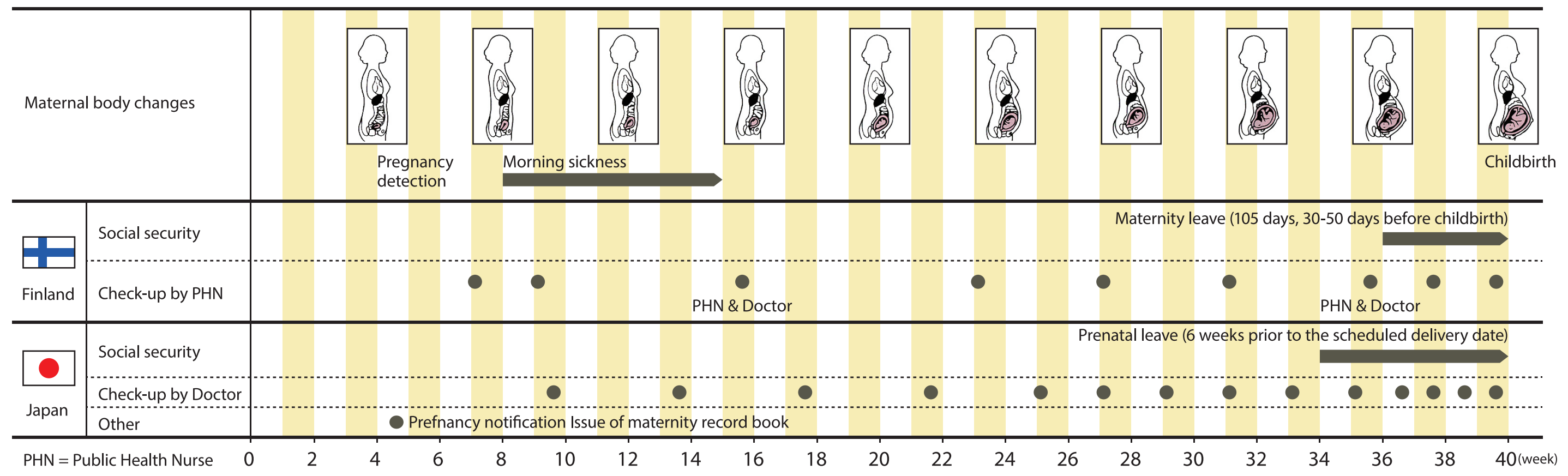
Comparative research of childcare systems between Finnish Neuvola Service Design with Japanese services

Fukuoka, Japan

Comparison of the social systems for childbirth and childcare in Finland and Japan

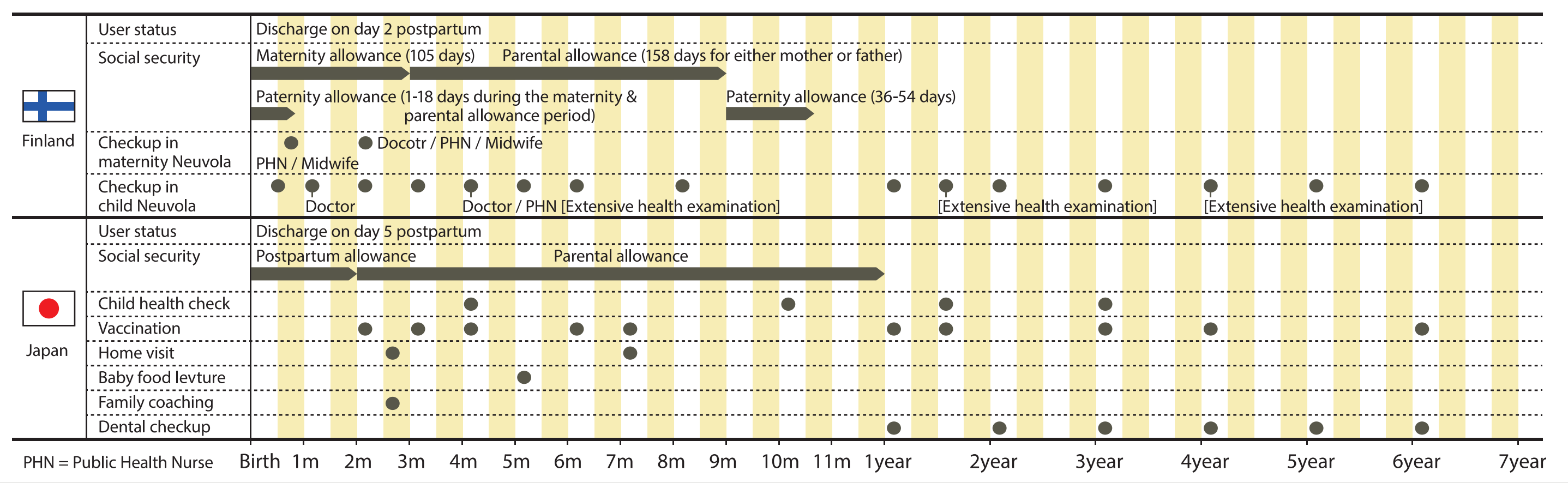


Maternity services in pregnancy period



The Japanese government has planned by 2020 to introduce the Finnish Neuvola System, a fundamental social childcare system that covers the period of pregnancy to child care. The purpose of this research is to clarify the conditions for high quality of Neuvola service, comparing childcare of Finland and Japan. First, the social systems of Finland and Japan, legal actions and other related social backgrounds are covered. Following this, the results are analyzed. Secondly, the results of interviews in Finland with Neuvola public health nurses and three typical Neuvola users, including a father, mother, and pregnant woman are presented. As a result of survey, six conditions were identified as the basis of Neuvola services: personal health checks, communication through mutual dialogue, pleotropic care, facility preparation, management of service provider quality and customized information. In a society where nuclear families are increasing, it is harder to care for children without someone's support. In comparing Finnish and Japanese childcare systems, the Finnish system perceives childcare as a social matter. In the Neuvola System, people are always open to discuss about any worries or queries. In Japan, the system is closed toward personal matters and private treatment options are not adequate. This is a major factor in larger problems that exist in the Japanese system. The results are discussed in relation to previous studies of participatory roles in social health care services in the Japanese government and users of these services, leading to the proposal of a Japanese childcare service design.

Childcare services



The factors underpinning of quality childcare support services



Personal health checks

Health checks in Finland were performed on an individual basis from pregnancy until the child entered school, and conversations were based on private discourse about the couple's relationship, the surrounding support, the presence or absence of domestic violence, and the user's financial situation. Users gained peace of mind and answers to their questions at individual health checks. This was not only an advantage for the user but also for the service provider, because it helped them gain deeper understanding of individual situations. We think this approach helped practitioners detect and resolve problems before they became significant issues.



Facility preparation

Family participation was recommended in Neuvola facilities, with playrooms and chairs being provided for the whole family. Furthermore, the services were completed at a single facility, resulting in minimal burden and confusion for the user. This may account for the high rate of participation in the Neuvola service.



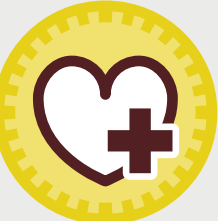
Communication through mutual dialogue

The core service provided at Neuvola was communication. Ensuring sufficient time to talk meant that everyone could receive advice about individual concerns and could ask questions regarding their children and family. As a result, public health nurses could resolve problems early and users appeared to gain peace of mind by having access to a reliable source of advice (i.e. the public health nurse). This created a relationship of trust between the provider and the user.



Management of service provider quality

At Neuvola, users were essentially taken care of by the same public health nurse for 7 years from pregnancy until the child entered school. Communication over this period was the reason for the relationship of trust; however, we believe that this is underpinned by an environment where public health nurses can keep working along with specialist education as well as legal and work systems.



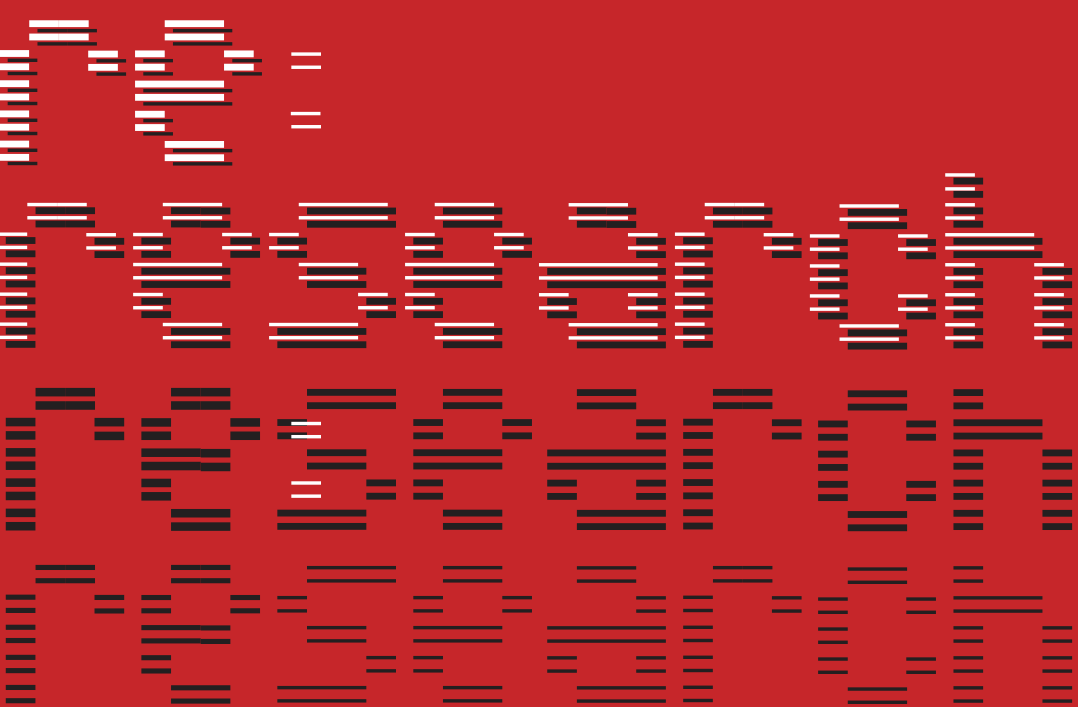
Pleotropic care

In Japan, doctors provide medical care for children. However, this is not a holistic approach because no matter how healthy a child is, it is difficult to raise the child unless the whole family is mentally and physically healthy. Although the approach of Neuvola to provide physical, mental, and financial support to the entire family may generate extra work, when looking at the growth of children in the long-term, the approach may actually be more effective.



Customized information

Users sought services that were not uniform but that were instead suited to the needs of the individual. Indeed, questions, anxieties, and problems that arise during pregnancy and childcare may require different approaches. Therefore, one user might only need one-way information provided by books and the Internet; but, if misjudged by the user, this could increase anxiety and problems. Nevertheless, we believe that providing accurate advice to the user enhances their peace of mind and it is best delivered directly by the public health nurse.



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