

# Top surgery in old surroundings

Töölö Hospital is located in central Helsinki. Seriously injured and wounded patients from all over Finland have received treatment there for over 80 years. The hospital which was founded by the Finnish Red Cross as a trauma hospital was the first of its kind in Finland in the early 1930s. It has a distinguished reputation as a treatment unit for the young and working-age population. Approximately 13,000 operations are performed annually in the Töölö Hospital.

The hospital initially focused on emergency surgery and orthopaedic traumatology. Later, it expanded its operations to include neurosurgery, hand surgery and plastic surgery. In wartime, the Töölö facilities functioned as a war hospital. The hospital has also functioned as a teaching hospital. In the 1950s, it became a unit of the Helsinki University Central Hospital (HUCH). It is still part of HUCH, now in the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa. The hospital receives patients from all over the country due to its national responsibility role.

When the new hospital was constructed in the 1930s, it was equipped with modern technology from the start. The hospital and its different wards have been directed by a large number of Finnish medical pioneers. Over the years, the hospital has accumulated more and more expertise. Now its staff perform both emergency surgery and national level demanding reconstructive surgery for patients with multiple illnesses. Töölö Hospital has become a nationally and interna-

tionally renowned operator in all its fields.

### The plastic surgery unit performs reconstructive surgery for severely injured patients

“The surroundings are getting a little old and the facilities have become crowded, but we still have top-level expertise and cutting-edge technology,” says Ward Manager Kirsti Föhr at the plastic surgery operational ward.

Plastic surgery is in public often linked mainly to aesthetic surgery, but the Töölö plastic surgery unit does not perform beauty surgery. Instead, they perform demanding surgical operations. Gun-shot wound patients come here for repair operations, as well as cancer patients who require complicated surgery. The intensive care of patients with severe burns has been nationally centralised to Töölö Hospital and the plastic surgery clinic. Another group of patients are those with cleft lips and palates, or

facial anomalies and large chin deformities.

“We work in close co-operation with HUSUKE, the Finnish Cleft Lip and Palate Centre. Our patients are often quite young, even three months old, and in need of surgery. We often develop a long-term treatment relationship with them,” says Kirsti.

#### CHALLENGE

The plastic surgery operational ward was looking for a multipurpose surgical table. Patient safety and ergonomics were among the most important criteria for the new table.

#### SOLUTION

The staff had since a long time worked with another Merivaara table with good results. The new Promerix table has proven to be both versatile and ergonomic thus meeting the needs of the ward.



Scrub technician Mikko Alanko (left) and Nurse Olli Pietikäinen (right) prepare the operating table for the next operation.



Ward Manager Kirsti Föhr and Assistant Ward Managers Päivi Koto and Minna Korpela manage the entire ward. They plan shifts and operation progress, and often have to make last minute changes due to emergency cases.

which makes work easier and faster. It doesn't have complicated screwed levers. It is versatile enough to be adjusted to completely different positions, which is a requirement on this ward. All in all, Promerix feels like an ergonomic choice, and good ergonomics promotes staff input and therefore patient safety," says Kirsti.

What about the emotional aspect of work?

"We treat babies and granddads alike. The work is demanding and both emotionally and physically strenuous due to patient illnesses and injuries. But the ward – and in fact the whole Töölö Hospital – has a good spirit and co-operation with other wards is seamless. I suppose the nature of our work promotes humour even in serious situations," says Kirsti as she prepares to receive the first patients of the day.

**"All in all, Promerix feels like an ergonomic choice."**

### Versatile expertise and team spirit

Many of the ward's patients have multiple illnesses and need special monitoring, for example during anaesthesia.

"These operations tend to be long and extremely complicated. In addition to the ward personnel, they require the help of different specialists and, often, anaesthetists and operating room nurses. We help each other out here, we have a great team spirit," says Kirsti.

The plastic surgery operational ward operations are also highly international. The ward is popular among foreign physicians and nurse students alike. The advanced technology and expert staff attract those willing to learn.

The operating room presents many ergonomic challenges, including transferring severely injured patients with multiple illnesses from their beds onto the operating table and positioning them so that work is possible and more easily manageable.

The plastic surgery ward has long used the Opera operating table manufactured by Merivaara. Many nurses prefer it because the model is easy to move and allows for easy patient positioning.

"We did get a 'Mercedes' a couple of years ago," laughs Kirsti, pointing at the Promerix table in the next room.

"The Promerix table is even more comfortable to use, and it has enough joints

### Staff that feel well fare better

Patient safety is the key issue. The plastic surgery ward invests in highly functional equipment and continuous staff training.

Proper ergonomics is an important aspect of staff well-being. All the different wards have an ergonomics coordinator to distribute information.



The plastic surgery unit's Ward Manager Kirsti Föhr and HUSUKE Ward Manager Ulla Elfving-Little feel their good about their teamwork.

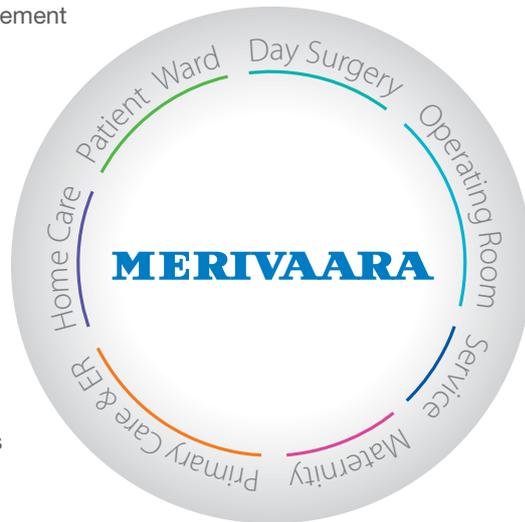
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