Nordic AI Meet 2026

O3. Human-Centred AI in Health & Welfare (Wed 13:00-14:00)

4. Procurement of AI Systems for Sustainable Healthcare Work Environments

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Abstract: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping healthcare by impacting clinical decisions, administrative duties, and the structure of healthcare work. Though often praised for enhancing efficiency and reducing manual tasks, studies show that AI can also introduce new stressors and reduce professional autonomy. These issues largely stem from how AI systems are procured, chosen, and implemented. In Nordic healthcare, public procurement - the main method for AI adoption - tends to emphasise cost and technical quality, often overlooking effects on the work environment. This gap between AI adoption and the long-term viability of healthcare work environments highlights an urgent need for theoretical insight and practical guidance.

This interdisciplinary, cross-national AI-PROCARE project seeks to redefine public procurement of AI systems activities to foster sustainable, equitable, and engaging healthcare work environments. Rather than treating AI systems procurement as a legal or administrative formality, the project develops a new theoretical perspective: procurement as a sociotechnical intervention that shapes the future of work. Hence, the project views it as a sociotechnical and negotiated activity shaped by institutional routines, inherent norms, and stakeholder priorities. Drawing on the Job Demands–Resources model, Job Crafting and Stakeholder theories, and User-Centred Systems Design, it examines how procurement activities influence job demands, resources, and the capacity for professional adaptation.

The project unfolds in two stages across Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Sweden. In the empirical stage (WP1–WP2), interviews and case analyses explore how work environment concerns are understood and prioritised in procurement. In the co-design stage (WP3–WP4), these insights are used to develop and evaluate procurement guidelines that integrate psychosocial considerations, stakeholder participation, and alignment with the EU AI Act.

AI-PROCARE advances scientific understanding of procurement as a sociotechnical intervention, providing empirically grounded, evaluated guidelines for the responsible procurement of AI systems. It supports a digital transformation in Nordic healthcare that aligns technological innovation with the sustainability of professional work