

WASA DAILY

Nr 21 Sunday, May 25, 2025

ISSN 2965-2456

Borrowable Rowboats in Vaasa

The Future of Newspapers

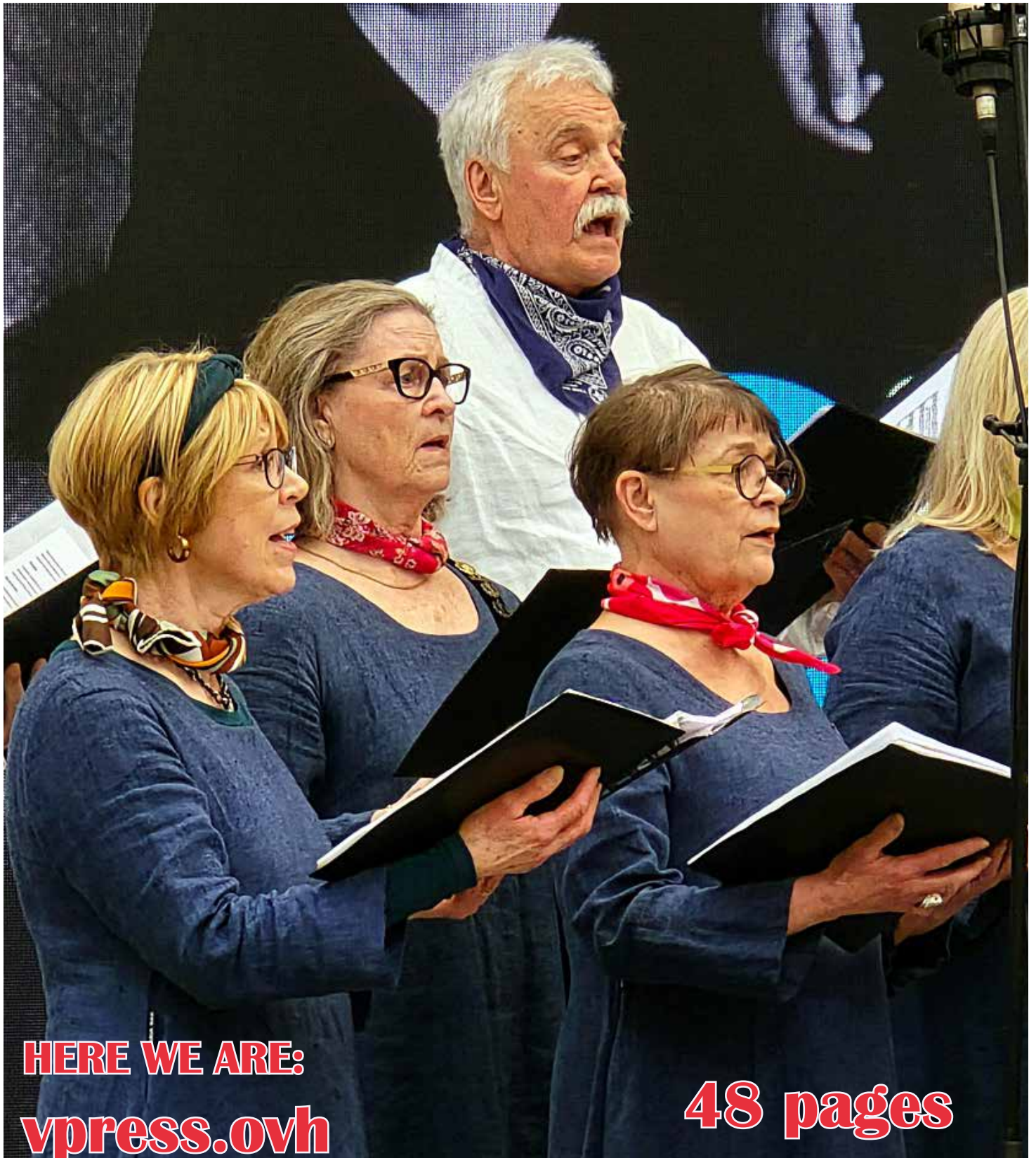
Prostate Cancer

The Church in Maxmo 200 y

Russian Shadow Fleet

There can be life out there

WASA DAILY



HERE WE ARE:

vpress.ovh

48 pages

TODAY

The Future of Newspapers

For centuries, newspapers were the primary source of news, shaping public opinion and holding power to account.

The morning ritual of reading the daily paper was a cornerstone of informed citizenship. However, the rise of radio, television, and, most disruptively, the internet, has drastically altered the media landscape. Today, newspapers face declining circulation, shrinking advertising revenues, and fierce competition from digital platforms. Yet, despite these challenges, newspapers remain one of the most reliable sources of well-researched, fact-checked news and insightful commentary. The question now is: What can be done to secure the future of reliable newspapers?

The Decline of Print and the Rise of Digital Disruption

The golden age of newspapers saw them as indispensable—delivering breaking news, investigative journalism, and in-depth analysis. However, the digital revolution has eroded their dominance. Social media platforms and 24-hour news channels provide instant updates, often prioritizing speed over accuracy. Free online news sources have conditioned readers to expect information without cost, making it difficult for traditional newspapers to sustain themselves through subscriptions alone.

Advertising, once the financial backbone of newspapers, has migrated to tech giants like Google and Facebook, which offer targeted ads at lower costs. As a result, many newspapers have downsized, merged, or shut down entirely, leaving "news deserts" in communities that no longer have local journalism.

Why Newspapers Still Matter

Despite these challenges, newspapers remain vital for several reasons:

Credibility & Accountability – Unlike many online sources, reputable newspapers adhere to strict editorial standards, fact-checking, and ethical journalism. They provide context, verification, and

accountability—qualities often missing in viral social media posts.

Investigative Journalism – Newspapers invest in long-form investigations that expose corruption, injustice, and systemic failures. Stories like Watergate or the Panama Papers demonstrate the irreplaceable role of print journalism in democracy.

In-Depth Analysis – While digital platforms favor bite-sized news, newspapers offer thoughtful editorials, expert opinions, and comprehensive reporting that help readers understand complex issues.

Strategies to Secure the Future of Newspapers

To survive and thrive in the digital age, newspapers must adapt without sacrificing their core values. Here are key strategies:

1. **Embrace Digital Transformation Without Abandoning Print**

Newspapers must fully integrate digital platforms while maintaining print for loyal readers. Many legacy papers, like The New York Times and The Washington Post, have successfully transitioned to digital-first models with strong paywalls. Offering exclusive digital content—such as podcasts, interactive graphics, and video reports—can attract younger audiences.

2. **Strengthen Subscription Models & Reader Revenue**

Reliance on advertising alone is no longer sustainable. Newspapers must convince readers that quality journalism is worth paying for. Strategies include:

Flexible subscription tiers (e.g., student discounts, premium memberships).

Membership perks (early access, exclusive events, ad-free browsing).

Community-supported journalism (donations, crowdfunding for specific investigations).

3. **Leverage AI & Technology Responsibly**

Artificial intelligence can streamline news production, personalize content, and detect misinformation. However, human oversight must remain central to maintain trust. AI can assist in data journalism, automate routine reporting (e.g., sports scores, financial updates), and enhance reader engagement through chatbots and tailored recommenda-

tions.

4. **Focus on Local Journalism**

Many struggling newspapers are local. Yet, local news is crucial for community engagement, government accountability, and grassroots issues. Solutions include:

Partnerships with nonprofits (e.g., ProPublica's local reporting collaborations). Hyperlocal digital editions target Government & philanthropic funding to sustain public-interest journalism.

5. **Combat Misinformation with Transparency**

In an era of "fake news," newspapers must double down on credibility. Fact-checking initiatives, transparent sourcing, and corrections policies can reinforce trust. Explaining the journalistic process—how stories are researched and verified—can differentiate newspapers from unreliable online sources.

6. **Diversify Revenue Streams**

Beyond ads and subscriptions, newspapers can explore:

Events & conferences (hosting debates, expert panels).

E-commerce & affiliate marketing (recommending books, tools).

Licensing content to schools, libraries, and other media outlets.

The future of newspapers is not about nostalgia for print but about preserving the values of reliable journalism in a digital world. While the medium may change, the mission remains the same: to inform, educate, and hold power accountable.

Readers must recognize that quality news is not free—supporting newspapers through subscriptions and memberships is an investment in democracy. Governments and tech companies should also play a role, whether through subsidies, tax incentives, or fairer revenue-sharing from platforms that profit from news content.

If newspapers adapt intelligently—combining digital innovation with unwavering journalistic integrity—they can not only survive but thrive. The alternative—a world dominated by unchecked misinformation and hollow clickbait—is too dangerous to accept.

Photo Supplement



NEWS

VAASA

"Great way to try rowing without ownership – perfect recreational opportunity!"



Vaasa to Introduce Borrowable Rowboats – Citizens' Budgeting Project Chooses Nautical Initiative

Vaasa residents have voted – the winning idea in this year's participatory budgeting initiative is borrowable rowboats. The project received 404 votes, nearly 20% of all votes cast. The boats will arrive in Vaasa's waters this summer, offering residents and visitors a new way to enjoy the archipelago.

From Citizen Suggestion to Implementation

The rowboat idea emerged as one of the most popular

among 258 proposals collected in February-March. In the final vote, it outpaced runner-up outdoor gym equipment (321 votes) and third-place 3 vs. 3 basketball court (282 votes).

"We received excellent proposals, and the voting clearly engaged Vaasa residents. Rowboats are a wonderful addition to our outdoor recreation options," said Suvi Aho, Strategic Development Manager at the City of Vaasa.

The city has allocated €15,000 for the project, which will cover boats and life jackets. Borrowing stations are planned for Ukkokari, Onkilahti, and Vähäkyrö, where local businesses will manage rentals during their

operating hours.

A Coastal City for All

Voters highlighted multiple benefits of the rowboat scheme:

"Vaasa is a seaside city, but not everyone has access to boats."

"Great way to try rowing without ownership – perfect recreational opportunity!"

"Would make the archipelago accessible to low-income residents and tourists."

"Rowing is great exercise and provides access to better fishing spots."

Next Projects Coming in 2026

The participatory budgeting initiative empowers residents to shape their environment. Previous editions have brought Vaasa its cherry tree park, wildflower meadows, winter swimming spots, and additional benches along waterfront trails.

The rowboat service will launch in early summer, with details announced on the city website and social media. The next budgeting cycle begins in early 2026.

Source: Vaasa.fi

NEWS

YOU CAN READ THIS NEWSPAPER ANYWHERE



You can read this paper wherever You are. Like here in Tampere

BLOG WRITERS

Join Wasa Daily as a Blog Writer!

Are you passionate about sharing your thoughts, stories, or expertise with the community? **Wasa Daily** is looking for enthusiastic blog writers to contribute engaging content for our readers.

Whether you love writing about local events, culture, lifestyle, business, or personal experiences, we welcome your voice!

Writing for Wasa Daily is a great opportunity to reach a wider audience, connect with fellow locals, and showcase your creativity. No prior experience is needed—just bring your ideas and enthusiasm! We value diverse perspectives and fresh voices that reflect the vibrant spirit of our community.

Interested? Send us your blog pitch or a short sample, and let's get your words published! Join us in making *Wasa Daily* a platform for meaningful conversations and inspiring stories.



Contact us at wasadagblad@gmail.com for more details. We can't wait to hear from you!

MOTHERS

What Do the Statistics Tell Us About Finnish Mothers?



Following Mother's Day celebrations, Statistics Finland has released fascinating data about the lives of Finnish mothers. The numbers reveal insights about how many women have children, when women become mothers, and the size of modern families.

Nearly 1.6 Million Mothers

Finland is home to approximately 1.6 million mothers - women who have biological or adopted children. This means 65% of women aged 15-89 have children. The percentage varies by age group: while 88% of women aged 80-89 have children, the figure is 80% for those aged 45-49.

Two Children Most Common

The most common family size is two children - 44% of mothers have two kids. 24% have one

child and 21% have three children. 10% of mothers have four or more children.

First Child Born After Age 30

In 2024, women gave birth to their first child at an average age of 30.4 years. The most common age range for first-time mothers was 30-34. Among mothers over 45, there were 221 births last year.

Few Adoptive Mothers But New Mothers Increasing

Last year saw nearly 19,000 new biological mothers. Through adoption, 77 women became mothers in 2023.

Grandmothers Play an Important Role

Finland has over 540,000 grandmothers with minor grandchildren. On average, women became grandmothers at age 61,

and the current average age of grandmothers is about 68 years.

The statistics show Finnish mothers are diverse - some have small families, others large ones, and women are becoming mothers later in life. One thing remains certain: mothers continue to hold a central place in Finnish society.

This data portrait of Finnish motherhood reveals both changing trends and enduring values in family life. While family sizes may be shrinking and motherhood starting later, the importance of mothers - and grandmothers - in Finnish culture remains strong. The numbers tell a story of adaptation to modern life while maintaining core family bonds.

Source: Tilastokeskus

NEWS

ALMA

New Skills and Friends Through Hobbies – Enrollment for Vasa Adult Education Centre Alma's Courses Begins in May



Are you interested in learning a new language, developing your creative skills, or enhancing your well-being?

Vasa Adult Education Centre Alma is once again opening its doors to new learners for the academic year 2025–26. Enrollment for the next academic year's wide range of courses will begin on Thursday, May 15th at 3:00 PM. The most eager can explore the course selection and register already now at uusi.opistopalvelut.fi/vaasa, where a large portion of the spring 2026 courses are already available for booking.

Alma has established itself as a significant centre for adult learning in the Vaasa region. Annually, the centre's over 1000 courses attract approximately 16,000 participants across ten different subject areas. Operations are not limited to Vaasa; Alma also organizes courses in Vähäkyrö, Laihia, and Isokyrö. In line with modern times, the selection of online and cre-

dit-based courses is also extensive, enabling studies regardless of time and place.

The adult education centre's courses and lectures are open to everyone, regardless of age or prior education.

The upcoming academic year once again brings exciting new additions that complement Alma's already rich offerings. New features include courses where you can try sewing with fish leather, find peace with prenatal yoga, delve into the secrets of the Old Norse language (norrønt) online, and discover balance through mindfulness and the well-being-promoting effects of music.

The selection of the most popular courses, such as Finnish at various levels, versatile sewing courses, and different massage techniques, has been expanded to meet the increased demand. Particularly, ceramics and shoe-making courses have traditionally filled up quickly as soon as registration opens, so prompt action is advisable. The course offerings in the Kyrönmaa region have also been

strengthened with new yoga courses, bringing well-being closer to the area's residents.

In addition to traditional hobby courses, Alma also invests in professional development by offering various qualifying training programs. An example of this is the Mental Health First Aid courses, upon successful completion of which participants receive an official certificate of competence. These courses provide valuable skills both for individual well-being and in working life.

"Although the majority of the courses for the academic year 2025–26 will be published in May in connection with the registration, it is good to remember that we continuously update our offerings throughout the year," reminds Sannasirkku Autio, the principal of Vasa Adult Education Centre Alma. She emphasizes the importance of adult education centres not only as an environment for learning new skills but also as a vital meeting place for community and new friendships. "It is paramount for us to offer diverse learning opportunities

for people of all ages and in different life situations. Learning is not just about acquiring new skills; it is also a way to enrich life and promote well-being."

In addition to online registration, Alma also offers more traditional registration methods. Interested individuals can register for courses in person at Alma's service points in Vaasa at Raastuvankatu 31 (tel. 0400 868 110, open Mon-Fri 8 AM–4 PM) and Raastuvankatu 33 (tel. 040 6299 133, open Mon-Thu 10 AM–2 PM). At the service points, knowledgeable staff will be happy to assist with course selections and answer any questions.

Now is an excellent time to explore Alma's wide range of courses online and plan the upcoming academic year with new, interesting hobbies and learning experiences. Whether your interests lie in languages, art, exercise, well-being, or practical skills, Alma's diverse selection is sure to offer something for everyone. Seize the opportunity and register to enrich your life with new skills and friends!

Source: [Vaasa.fi](https://vaasa.fi)

EU

EU Adopts 17th Sanctions Package with Strong Focus on Russia's Shadow Fleet



HFiF-image

The European Union has approved its 17th package of sanctions against Russia, introducing robust measures targeting Moscow's shadow fleet while continuing to respond to its war of aggression against Ukraine, destabilizing activities against EU and third countries, and deteriorating human rights situation domestically.

Key Components of New Sanctions

The comprehensive package introduces measures across four critical areas:

Individual Sanctions

Targets 27 new individuals in-

cluding Russian military officials, political figures, propagandists, and business leaders supporting the regime

Includes Russia's Surgutneftegaz oil company and several Chinese entities

Freezes assets and imposes travel bans

Sectoral Measures

Sanctions extended to 342 vessels in Russia's shadow fleet, including the Eagle-S tanker

Expanded export ban list covering goods supporting Russia's military-industrial complex

New restrictions on companies circumventing existing sanctions

Hybrid Threat Response

Additional listings targeting actors undermining EU and member state security

Updated criteria to address evolving Russian hybrid tactics

Human Rights Sanctions

New designations for perpetrators of systematic human rights abuses in Russia

Extended sanctions framework for chemical weapons use in Ukraine

Sanctions regime prolonged for one year

Notable Focus on Shadow Fleet

The package delivers the EU's most significant action yet against Russia's shadow fleet, which has been instrumental in evading oil

price caps. The 342 newly listed vessels represent approximately 45% of Russia's sanctioned shadow fleet operations.

"These measures strike at the heart of Russia's sanctions evasion networks while maintaining pressure on its war machine," stated an EU spokesperson.

Chemical Weapons Designations

Three Russian military entities involved in chemical weapons development and deployment in Ukraine face new restrictions under the EU's chemical weapons sanctions framework.

Next Steps:

The legal acts will be published in the EU Official Journal on 21 May 2025, with measures taking immediate effect.

Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

NEWS

Ostrobothnia Classics: Nelimarkka, Myntti and Vionoja as Kokkola's Summer Highlight



*Eemu Myntti
Self portrait 1931*

perception of the Ostrobothnian soulcape.

Eemu Myntti exploded the boundaries of Ostrobothnian expression with color and passion. In his paintings, Laihia glows as brightly as the Riviera – perhaps even brighter. Myntti was the flâneur of his time, enjoying southern life while carrying an Ostrobothnian temperament.

Women Through Three Artists' Eyes

The exhibition also shows how these three distinct artists portrayed women. Vionoja's solemn Laestadian women, Nelimarkka's tender maternal figures and Myntti's exotic madonnas together narrate the story of woman as both earthy and iconic.

Summer Events

On the opening day, June 14, 2025, the museum courtyard will host Summer Opening events with curator Anne-Maj Salin's guided tours in Swedish and Finnish. The exhibition runs May 23-August 24, 2025 at Rosendal House, with texts in Finnish, Swedish and English.

"The handsome always prevail" – and now their art prevails at the museum. Welcome to experience the classics of Ostrobothnia!

K.H.Renlund Museum, Rosendal House
Pitkäsillankatu 39, Kokkola
May 23-August 24, 2025
More info: www.kokkolan-museot.fi

"The handsome always prevail" – this old Ostrobothnian saying reflects an unshakable belief in one's own abilities.

This timeless wisdom now takes on new dimensions at K.H.Renlund Museum's summer exhibition, featuring three masters from Pohjanmaa: Eero Nelimarkka, Eemu Myntti and Veikko Vionoja. Their works don't just depict Ostrobothnia – they embody the very essence of Ostrobothnian character: resilient, atmospheric and profoundly original.

Three Masters, One Ostrobothnian Soul

The exhibition "The Skilled Always Prevail" at Rosendal House presents three artists from different generations – Nelimarkka (1891-1977), Myntti (1890-1943) and Vionoja (1909-2001) – engaging in dialogue with each other and with contemporary times. Their works blend international influences with Ostrobothnian roots, nature's raw beauty with human tenderness.

This marks the first time Kokkola's own pride, Veikko Vionoja's works, are exhibited extensively alongside Eero Nelimarkka's and Eemu Myntti's pieces. A total of 54 paintings, drawings and prints tell the story of art deeply rooted in the pla-

ins yet carrying international sensibility.

Landscapes Transformed into Art

"One can only depict what the heart is completely attached to," said Veikko Vionoja. His works present Ostrobothnian landscapes and interiors as melancholic memories where time seems to have stood still, while simultaneously expressing profound modernist thought through abstract lines and classical composition.

Eero Nelimarkka gave the Ostrobothnian landscape its identity. His window interiors, wintry fields and flowing rivers have become timeless classics that still define our

ART EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK



Louis Jean François Lagrenée vanhempi / den äldre / the Elder
21.1.1725, Paris 19.6.1805, Paris
Pygmalion och hans staty, 1777

EVENTS

UMEÅ WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM

IN THE SECRET SERVICE OF THE KINGDOM

4.5 - 20.8.2025

Meet the women in the Swedish intelligence service during World War II. Hotel cleaners, cleaners and secretaries are recruited to the Swedish intelligence service. They secretly act as informants, couriers, or infiltrators. Others are employees of the Postal Service, the Telephone Control, or the Defense Staff's cryptography department to write, decipher, translate, and search through letters and calls about suspicious things."

<https://www.kvinnohistoriskt.se/>

ILMAJOKI MUSIC FESTIVAL

"BIG Wrath 1713-1721"

6.-15.6.2025

"This powerful and topical opera brings the years of hatred and the fates of our ancestors back to the banks of the Kyrönjoki River.

Big Wrath is a shaking and nourishing story about family ties, maternal love, perseverance, and the power of cooperation during a time, when Russia's brutal war of aggression against Finland burned Ostrobothnia to black soil."

www.musiikkijuhlat.fi

EVENING MUSIC

In Vaasa Church – enjoy the atmosphere of a classic summer evening

Feel the atmosphere of summer evenings with high-quality music in Vaasa Church. The Evangelical Lutheran parishes are once again offering free classical music concerts, which have already established themselves as the pearls of the city's summer programme over the years.

Classical evening music on Wednesdays from 4.6.25 at 19.30

4.6. Kamarikuoro Canticum Maris.

11.6. Serene Erhie, sopraano ja Anna Roos, piano.

18.6. Monica Heikius, sopraano ja Karolin Wargh, urut.

25.6. Jonna Pirttijoki-Helander, harmonikka, laulu ja Sauli Perälä, piano, laulu.

2.7. Erica Nygård, huili ja Niels Burgmann, urut.

9.7. Loviisa Tuomisto ja Valtteri Tuomisto, urut, piano ja laulu.

16.7. Jenny Sandelin, sopraano ja Anton Ylikallio, piano.

tiistai 22.7. kello 18.30 Pétur Sakari, urut. Yhteistyössä Korsholman Musiikkijuhlien kanssa.

6.8. Inka Pärssinen, trumpet ja Hanna Koljonen, urut.

13.8. Noora Karhuluoma, sopraano ja Marco Bonacci, sem-balo.

ALL STARS FOOTBALL MATCH

12.6.2025

Lemonsoft Stadium

Charity match

Wasa Stars brings stars to the arena – Tim Sparv's team meets Gilla FC with millions of followers on social media

Wasa All Stars football match! The brightest stars of football and entertainment in Vaasa in June!

<https://wasastars.fi/>

AMOX REX Helsinki

12.6.25

FREE admission throughout the Helsinki Day

www.amoxrex.fi

LISÄÄ LÖYLYÄ

Rock Festival

13.-14.6.-2025

Vaskiluoto (sink), Vaasa

<https://lisaaloilyla.fi/>

PROVINSSI 2025

26.-28.6.2025

Provinssi Festival celebrated in Seinäjoki

Provinssi is celebrated annually in the last week of June and is one of Northern Europe's most traditional and largest festivals. The People's Festival, which has been organised since 1979 in the scenic surroundings of Törnävänsaari in Seinäjoki, always presents an up-to-date and comprehensive selection from all sides of the music field, without forgetting

surprises.

<https://www.provinssi.fi/>

DREAM FESTIVAL

5.7.2025

Yliopistonranta 5

Vasa

The summer's dreamiest festival, a mix of love, joy and community, with the music we all love!

<https://www.drommenfestival.fi/>

KASKINEN'S SUMMER OF MUSIC

9-12.7.25

A classical music festival in Finland's smallest town.

"The proximity of the sea, the history of the city of Kaskinen, bilingualism, the beautiful wooden house environment"

Artistic directors Anna-mari and Samuli Peltonen

Seinäjoki Tango Market

9.-13.7.2025

<https://tangomarkkinat.fi/>

BIG DAY SUMMER FESTIVAL

Vaasa

11.7.-12.7.2025

<https://www.bigdayfestival.fi/>

LOHTAJA CHURCH MUSIC FESTIVAL

22-27.7.25

Church music from thousand-year-old traditions

www.kirkkomusiikkijuhlat.fi

NÄRPES THEATRE

"Maskinisterna (The Machinists)", a Swedish-language play about the Wickström Brothers and their engine factory, with a script and direction by Erik Kiviniemi.

World premiere 28.6.25 klo 19

Other events:

1-.7 at 7 pm

3.7. at 7 pm

7.7. at 7 pm

8.7. klo 19

10.7 at 7 pm

13.7. at 5 pm

15.7. at 19

16.7. at 19

17.7. at 19

19.7. at 19

KORSHOLM MUSIC FESTIVAL

23.7.-30.7.2025

"Korsholm Music Festival 2024 and Tove Teuvalla Opera are over and autumn is approaching. Now we are already

working on the Summer 2025 Music Festival. However, we want to return to the warm days and festival atmosphere of July and August."



A greeting from festival director Viktor Nygård: "I am very much looking forward to working with the Korsholm Music Festival and I have many exciting ideas for how we can continue to develop the festival. I can already promise that next year it will be a fantastic festival with something for everyone."

RITZ

25.7.25 at 7 pm

MARI PALO – TANGO

One of Finland's most sought-after sopranos dives into the world of tang.

Korsholm Music Festival

VAAJA CITY HALL

27.7.25

CONCERT ROYAL

Amélie goes to Belgrade with her friends

Korsholm Music Festival

VAAJA FESTIVAL 2025

31.7.-2.8.2025

Music, food and wine

In Vaasa's inner harbour

<https://vaasafestival.fi/>

WASA FUTURE FESTIVAL

11-16.8.2025

The Wasa Future Festival 2026 is set to take place from 11th to 16th August.

This event gathers knowledgeable and motivated individuals from the business world, universities, regional decision-making bodies, and ministerial corps to focus on solving issues in Vaasa and across Finland.

CHOIR SINGING and HEALTH

Choir Singing Extends Life: Is There Scientific Evidence?



For centuries, singing in choirs has been celebrated for its emotional and social benefits. But could it also help people live longer?

Finnish researcher Markku Hyypä has claimed that choir singing extends life expectancy, but is there any real scientific evidence to support this idea? While Hyypä's assertion may sound like an opinion, research from around the world suggests that group singing—particularly in choirs—may indeed have measurable health benefits that could contribute to longevity.

The Finnish Per-

spective: Markku Hyypä's Claims

Markku Hyypä, a well-known Finnish social epidemiologist, has studied the relationship between social cohesion and health. In his work, he has argued that communal activities like choir singing strengthen social bonds, which in turn improve mental and physical health. Hyypä suggests that the combination of deep breathing, emotional expression, and social interaction found in choir singing may reduce stress, lower the risk of depression, and even enhance immune function—all factors that could contribute to a longer life.

However, Hyypä's claims are not based solely on his own research but align with

broader scientific findings on the health benefits of music and social engagement.

Scientific Evidence Supporting Choir Singing and Longevity

1. Stress Reduction and Lower Cortisol Levels

Multiple studies have shown that singing, especially in groups, reduces stress by lowering cortisol levels. A 2016 study from the University of Frankfurt found that choir singers experienced significant reductions in stress hormones after rehearsals. Chronic stress is linked to numerous health problems, including heart disease and weakened immune function, so activities that mitigate stress may indirectly support longevity.

2. Improved Lung Function and Cardiovascular Health

Singing requires controlled breathing, which can improve lung capacity and oxygenation. A 2013 study published in *Music and Medicine* found that regular choir singers had better respiratory control than non-singers. Additionally, deep, rhythmic breathing has been linked to improved heart rate variability (HRV), a marker of cardiovascular health. Since heart disease is a leading cause of death worldwide, activities that support heart health could contribute to a longer life.

3. Enhanced Mental Health and Social Connection

Loneliness and social isolation are significant risk



factors for early mortality, comparable to smoking or obesity. Choir singing fosters a strong sense of community, reducing feelings of loneliness. A 2017 study from the University of Oxford found that group singing releases endorphins and oxytocin, promoting social bonding and reducing anxiety and depression. Since mental health is closely tied to physical health, these benefits could translate into longer lifespans.

4. Cognitive Benefits and Dementia Prevention

Engaging in musical activities has been linked to better cognitive function in older adults. A 2020 study in *The Journals of Gerontology* found that older adults who participated in choir singing showed improved memory and executive function compared to non-singers. Since

cognitive decline is a major factor in aging, activities that keep the brain active may help delay dementia and other age-related conditions.

5. Immune System Boost

A groundbreaking 2004 study from the University of California found that singing increased levels of immunoglobulin A, an antibody that plays a crucial role in immune function. A stronger immune system means better resistance to infections and diseases, which could contribute to a longer, healthier life.

Counterarguments and Limitations

While the evidence is compelling, it's important to note that most studies on choir singing and health are observational or small-scale. Longevity is influenced by many factors, including ge-

netics, diet, and exercise, so attributing extended life solely to choir singing may be an oversimplification. Additionally, the benefits may stem more from the social aspect of choir singing rather than the singing itself.

While Markku Hyypä's claim that "choir singing extends life" may sound bold, it is supported by a growing body of scientific research. From stress reduction and improved cardiovascular health to stronger social bonds and cognitive benefits, the evidence suggests that regular participation in choir singing can contribute to a longer, healthier life. While it may not be a magic bullet for longevity, it is certainly a joyful and scientifically backed way to enhance well-being.

So, if you've ever considered joining a choir, the

science says: go for it—it might just help you live longer.

Scientific References Supporting Choir Singing and Longevity

1. Stress Reduction & Cortisol Levels

Study: Kreutz, G., Bongard, S., Rohrmann, S., Hoddapp, V., & Grebe, D. (2004).

Title: "Effects of choir singing or listening on secretory immunoglobulin A, cortisol, and emotional state."

Journal: *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 27(6), 623-635.

Finding: Choir singing was associated with increased levels of immunoglobulin A (immune boost) and reduced cortisol (stress hormone).

Study: Fancourt, D., Wil-



liamon, A., Carvalho, L.A., Steptoe, A., Dow, R., & Lewis, I. (2016).

Title: "Singing modulates mood, stress, cortisol, cytokine activity, and neuropeptide activity."

Journal: *EClinicalMedicine*, 3, 79-88.

Finding: Group singing significantly reduced cortisol levels and improved mood.

2. Respiratory & Cardiovascular Benefits

Study: Bonilha, A.G., Onofre, F., Vieira, M.L., Prado, M.Y.A., & Martinez, J.A.B. (2009).

Title: "Effects of singing classes on pulmonary function and quality of life of COPD patients."

Journal: *International Journal of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease*, 4, 1-8.

Finding: Singing improved lung function in patients with chronic respiratory condi-

tions.

Study: Vickhoff, B., Malmgren, H., Aström, R., Nyberg, G., Ekström, S., Engwall, M., ... & Jörnsten, R. (2013).

Title: "Music structure determines heart rate variability of singers."

Journal: *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4, 334.

Finding: Choir singing synchronized heart rhythms among participants, suggesting cardiovascular benefits.

3. Mental Health & Social Bonding

Study: Pearce, E., Launay, J., & Dunbar, R.I.M. (2015).

Title: "The ice-breaker effect: Singing mediates fast social bonding."

Journal: *Royal Society Open Science*, 2(10), 150221.

Finding: Group singing accelerated social bonding, similar to team sports, but with stronger emotional effects.

Study: Coulton, S., Clift, S., Skingley, A., & Rodriguez, J. (2015).

Title: "Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of community singing on mental health-related quality of life of older people: Randomised controlled trial."

Journal: *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 207(3), 250-255.

4. Cognitive Benefits & Dementia Prevention

Study: Johnson, J.K., Louhivuori, J., Stewart, A.L., Tolvanen, A., Ross, L., & Era, P. (2013).

Title: "Quality of life (QOL) of older adult community choral singers in Finland."

Journal: *International Psychogeriatrics*, 25(7), 1055-1064.

Finding: Choir singers had better cognitive function and overall well-being compared

to non-singers.

Study: Särkämö, T., Teravainen, M., Laitinen, S., Numminen, A., Kurki, M., Johnson, J.K., & Rantanen, P. (2014).

Title: "Cognitive, emotional, and social benefits of regular musical activities in early dementia: Randomized controlled study."

Journal: *The Gerontologist*, 54(4), 634-650.

Finding: Musical activities (including singing) helped maintain memory and reduce cognitive decline in dementia patients.

5. Immune System Enhancement

Study: Beck, R.J., Cesario, T.C., Yousefi, A., & Enamoto, H. (2000).

Title: "Choral singing, performance perception, and immune system changes in salivary immunoglobulin A



and cortisol.”

Journal: Music Perception, 18(1), 87-106.

Finding: Singing increased immunoglobulin A (an immune booster) more than just listening to music.

Markku Hyypä's Work on Social Cohesion & Health

While Hyypä has not published a direct study on choir singing and longevity, his research on social capital and health aligns with the idea that group activities (like choirs) improve well-being:

Hyypä, M.T. (2010). Healthy Ties: Social Capital, Population Health and Survival. Springer.

He has also written about how communal participation (e.g., cultural activities) reduces mortality risk in Finland.

The claim that "choir sin-

ging extends life" is not just an opinion—it is supported by multiple peer-reviewed studies showing benefits for stress, heart health, immunity, mental well-being, and cognitive function. While no single study proves that singing directly makes people live longer, the cumulative evidence suggests that it contributes to factors associated with longevity.

Images:

The Choir Festival in Vaasa 2025





ASTRONOMY

ASTRONOMY

Cambridge University: There Can Be Life Out There

James Webb Telescope detects strongest signs yet of possible life beyond Earth

In a discovery that could change our understanding of the cosmos, astronomers from the University of Cambridge have detected what may be the clearest sign of life ever observed beyond our solar system.

Using the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), the researchers have found the chemical fingerprints of dimethyl sulfide (DMS) and dimethyl disulfide (DMDS) in the atmosphere of exoplanet K2-18b — a world 124 light years from Earth that lies in the habitable zone of its star. On Earth, these molecules are produced solely by life, primarily marine microorganisms like plankton.

“If these signals are confirmed, it would mark the first time in human history we’ve detected a potential biosignature on a planet outside our solar system,” said Professor Nikku Madhusudhan,



who led the research.

The detection is statistically significant at the “three-sigma” level — meaning there’s only a 0.3% chance the signals occurred randomly. But scientists are cautious: to confirm a discovery, five-sigma certainty is required. A few more hours of telescope time could tip the balance.

The findings build on earlier JWST obser-

vations of K2-18b that identified methane and carbon dioxide in its hydrogen-rich atmosphere — indicators of a so-called “Hycean” planet, a water-covered world potentially capable of supporting life.

“This could be a tipping point,” said Madhusudhan. “The moment we began to glimpse the living universe.”

A cautious excitement

now grips the astronomical community. With further observations, we may be on the brink of answering one of humanity’s oldest questions: Are we alone?

<https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/strongest-hints-of-biological-activity>

The source text in this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

CANCER

What You Need to Know About Prostate Cancer

Former U.S. President Joe Biden announced last Friday that he has been found to have prostate cancer, an aggressive one, that has spread to his bones. But according to newspaper reports, his cancer is hormone-sensitive and can therefore be effectively treated.

In 1981, French President Francois Mitterand was told that he had prostate cancer, which had also spread to his bones. He had just begun his presidential term, which he then carried out successfully. He died of his illness, but not until 15 years later, in 1996.

What, then, is this disease that seems to afflict presidents? Why is it that the disease in these two people was not found until it has spread to the bones?

Prostate cancer is one of the most common types of cancer affecting men today. While a cancer diagnosis can be frightening, not all prostate cancers are life-threatening, and many men with the disease live long, healthy lives. Understanding the risks, symptoms, diagnostic methods, and treatment options is essential, especially for men over the age of 50. This article answers some of the most common questions and provides guidance to help you or your loved ones make informed decisions.

How Common Is Prostate Cancer?

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men

after skin cancer. Globally, it affects more than 1.4 million men every year, and in many developed countries, 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed with it during their lifetime.

The risk increases with age. It is rare in men under 50, but very common in men over 70. In fact, autopsy studies have shown that many older men who die of unrelated causes have evidence of undiagnosed, slow-growing prostate cancer. This highlights that while the disease is common, it is often not aggressive.

What Is the Prostate, and Why Does It Matter?

The prostate is a small gland about the size of a walnut, located just below the bladder in men. It produces part of the fluid in semen, which helps nourish and transport sperm. The prostate surrounds the urethra (the tube that carries urine from the bladder out of the body), so when it becomes enlarged due to cancer or other conditions, it can affect urination.

What Are the Symptoms of Prostate Cancer?

In its early stages, prostate cancer usually causes no symptoms at all. This is why screening plays such an important role.

When symptoms do occur, they may include:

- Difficulty starting or stopping urination
- Weak or interrupted urine flow
- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Pain or burning during urination or ejaculation
- Blood in the urine or semen
- Pain in the back, hips, or pelvis (especially if the cancer has spread)

However, these symptoms can



Joe Biden talking to Lucy Coffey, who at 108 is America's oldest woman veteran.

Photo David Lieneman, the White House, Wikimedia Commons-

also be caused by non-cancerous conditions such as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) or infections.

How Is Prostate Cancer Diagnosed?

Diagnosis usually begins with two common tests:

- PSA test (Prostate-Specific Antigen)
- Digital Rectal Exam (DRE)

The PSA test is a blood test that measures the level of a protein produced by prostate tissue. A high PSA level can be a sign of prostate cancer, but it can also be elevated due to infection, age, or BPH.

The digital rectal exam allows the doctor to feel for lumps or abnormalities in the prostate.

If either test suggests a problem, the next step may involve MRI imaging and a prostate biopsy—a procedure where

small samples of prostate tissue are removed and analyzed for cancer cells.

What's the Value of PSA Testing?

PSA testing is controversial because:

It can detect cancers early, before they cause symptoms.

But it can also lead to overdiagnosis—finding slow-growing cancers that would never have caused harm.

This sometimes leads to overtreatment, with side effects like incontinence or sexual dysfunction.

Many health organizations now recommend individualized decisions about PSA testing, based on age, personal and family history, and overall health.

Should Men Over 70 Get PSA

Tested Without Symptoms?
This is a key question. For healthy men over 70, PSA testing may still be considered—but the benefits are less clear than for younger men.

Why?

Prostate cancer in older men is often slow-growing.

Many older men die with prostate cancer, not because of it.

If life expectancy is less than 10–15 years, finding and treating prostate cancer may not improve survival and could reduce quality of life.

However, if you're over 70 and in good health, and especially if you have a family history of prostate cancer, talk with your doctor about whether continued PSA screening is right for you.

Does Prostate Cancer Spread (Metastasize)?

Yes, it can. Prostate cancer typically spreads to:

Lymph nodes
Bones (especially hips, spine, and pelvis)
Less commonly to liver or lungs

Metastatic prostate cancer is more difficult to treat, but there are still effective treatment options that can prolong life and relieve symptoms.

What Are the Treatment Options?

Treatment depends on several factors:

The stage and grade of the cancer
PSA level

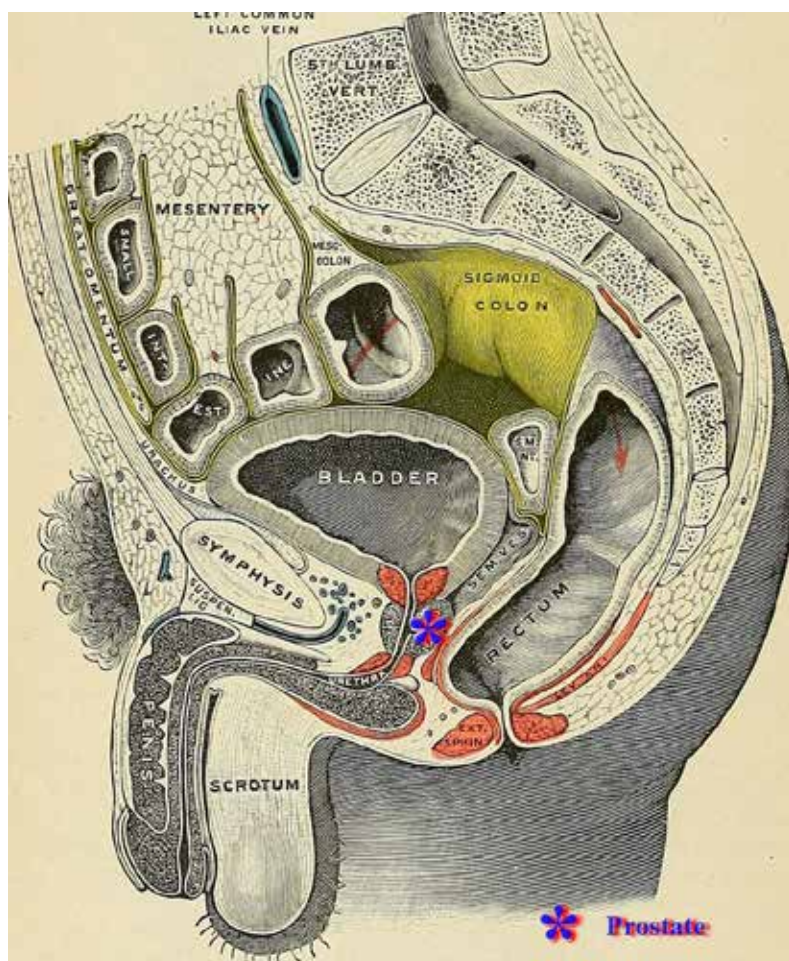
Age and general health
Personal preferences

Active Surveillance or Watchful Waiting

For low-risk, slow-growing prostate cancers, especially in older men, no immediate treatment may be needed. Instead, doctors monitor the cancer with regular PSA tests, exams, and occasional biopsies.

This avoids side effects from

Urogenital organs in Gray's Anatomy from 1913



surgery or radiation, which may not be necessary for a cancer that may never grow or spread.

2. Surgery (Prostatectomy)

Removal of the prostate gland is an option for healthy men with localized cancer. It carries risks of urinary incontinence and erectile dysfunction, but for many men, the benefits outweigh the risks.

3. Radiation Therapy

Radiation uses high-energy rays to destroy cancer cells. It can be external (from outside the body) or internal (brachytherapy, where radioactive seeds are placed in the prostate). Side effects are similar to surgery.

4. Hormone Therapy

If the cancer has spread or comes back, hormone therapy can slow its growth by reducing testosterone, which fuels prostate cancer.

5. Chemotherapy and Newer Therapies

Advanced cancers may be treated with chemotherapy, immunotherapy, or targeted

therapies, especially if hormone therapy stops working.

Why Is Prostate Cancer Becoming More Common?

There are several reasons:

Aging population – The risk increases with age.

Better awareness and more frequent PSA testing – Leads to more diagnoses.

Improved diagnostic tools – MRI and advanced biopsies catch cancers earlier.

Lifestyle factors – Obesity and diet may play a role.

But while more cases are being diagnosed, the good news is that prostate cancer death rates are declining, thanks to early detection and better treatments.

Conclusion: Know Your Risk, Talk to Your Doctor

Prostate cancer is common but often not dangerous. Knowing your risk factors and discussing PSA screening with your doctor can help you make the best

choice for your age and health.

Key takeaways:

If you're over 50, talk to your doctor about PSA testing.

If you're over 70 and healthy, testing may still be worthwhile—especially if you're at high risk.

Not all prostate cancers need treatment—some just need careful watching.

Treatment options are effective, and many men live long, full lives after a diagnosis.

Early detection can make all the difference.

Your health is personal—don't hesitate to ask questions and advocate for yourself. With the right information and medical support, prostate cancer can be managed effectively.

Melanosis Coli: A Benign Colonic Pigmentation Disorder

Melanosis coli, also known as pseudomelanosis coli, is a frequent finding during colonoscopy, characterized by brown or black mucosal pigmentation of the colon. This article reviews the etiology, often linked to laxative abuse, particularly anthraquinones, as well as the pigment composition (lipofuscin) and differentiation from melanin. We discuss the asymptomatic nature, typical endoscopic appearance, and the absence of established treatment or significant complications. The article concludes by addressing the inconclusive evidence regarding a potential association with colorectal cancer.

Melanosis coli is a benign disorder characterized by the deposition of pigment within the colonic mucosa. Despite its name, the pigment responsible is not melanin, but rather lipofuscin, a byproduct of cellular wear and tear. This article delves into the etiology, clinical presentation, endoscopic features, management, and the ongoing debate regarding its association with colorectal cancer.

Etiology:

The most common risk factor for melanosis coli is the long-

term use of certain laxatives, particularly those containing anthraquinones. Examples include senna, cascara sagrada, rhubarb, aloe vera, and frangula. Anthraquinones are believed to stimulate melanogenesis, a process that mistakenly leads to lipofuscin deposition in macrophages within the colonic lamina propria. Other proposed causes include chronic inflammatory bowel disease and heavy metal exposure, but evidence is limited.

Symptoms:

Melanosis coli is typically asymptomatic. It is often incidentally discovered during colonoscopy performed for unrelated reasons.

Endoscopic Findings:

Colonoscopy reveals characteristic brown or black mucosal pigmentation, usually in a patchy or marbled pattern, predominantly affecting the right colon. The pigment does not cause any structural changes to the colonic wall.

Treatment:

Melanosis coli itself does not require specific treatment. The primary approach involves identifying and addressing the underlying cause, such as discontinuing anthraquinone-containing

laxatives. Alternative laxatives like fiber supplements or osmotic agents can be considered.

Complications:

Melanosis coli is not associated with any significant complications. It does not cause inflammation, bleeding, or obstruction.

Association with Cancer:

The potential link between melanosis coli and colorectal cancer remains a subject of debate. While some studies suggest a higher prevalence of melanosis in patients with colorectal polyps or cancer, others haven't found a clear association. More research is needed to determine if melanosis coli is a risk factor or merely an incidental finding in these patients.

Conclusion:

Melanosis coli is a benign colonic pigmentation disorder most commonly linked to anthraquinone laxative use. It is asymptomatic and diagnosed on colonoscopy. Management focuses on addressing the underlying cause, and the condition carries no significant complications. The potential association with colorectal cancer requires further investigation.

Note: This article is intended for informational purposes only and should not be construed as medical advice.



Normal colon mucosa



The quite remarkable changes in colonic mucosa in Melanosis Coli

CHURCH

Maxmo church 200 years



In November 2025, Maxmo Church proudly celebrates its 200th anniversary. This beautiful wooden cruciform church, located in the heart of Maxmo in the municipality of Vörå, has for two centuries been a central place for worship, fellowship and important life events for generations of Ostrobothnians.

The church, which is currently used by Vörå parish, is not only an impressive neoclassical-style building, but also a living reminder of the region's rich history and cultural heritage.

The year was 1824 when Maxmo church was completed, the result of skilled craftsmanship under the guidance of the church builder Heikki Kuorikoski. It was officially inaugurated the following year and has since stood firmly as a spiritual and social hub. The building, with its 237 square meters, could accommodate as many as 500 people, which underlines its importance as a unifying force in a growing community.

The neoclassical style, which characterizes the church's exte-

rior, was a popular architectural trend in the 19th century, characterized by its clean lines, symmetry, and a sense of dignity. The wood material, which dominates the construction, is typical of the region's building tradition and gives the church a warm and inviting character. Over the years, the church has undergone several renovations – in 1897, 1904, 1933 and a more extensive one in the years 1961–62 – to preserve its beauty and functionality for future generations.

Inside the church, visitors are greeted by an atmosphere of stillness and devotion. The two-part altarpiece, created by J. Tegengren in 1933, catches the viewer's eye with its powerful depictions of "The Crucified" and "The Birth of Jesus". The church's musical tradition is strong, not least thanks to the impressive organ with its 15 voices. The instrument, made by Hans Heinrich in 1966, has an interesting history in itself. Its façade and parts of the pipework originate from the earlier organ built in 1903 by the renowned organ builder E. F. Walcker.

A special detail that connects Maxmo church with its predecessors is the bell tower. This was built as early as 1783 at the older church but was moved and raised in connection with the completion of the current church in 1824. The bells in the stack, cast in 1749 and 1783, have for centuries called for worship and marked important events in the lives of the people of Maxmo. Their sound is part of the district's soundscape and a reminder of the passage of time.

In its 200 years, Maxmo Church has been more than just a place for religious ceremonies. It has been a gathering point for joy and sorrow, a place where bonds have been forged and community has been strengthened. Baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and funerals have all taken place within its walls, making the church an integral part of residents' personal and collective memories. The priests who have served in Maxmo have played important roles in the community, not only as spiritual leaders but often also as contributors to education and

social well-being.

As Maxmo Church now faces its 200th anniversary in November 2025, it is an opportunity to look back at its rich history and at the same time look to the future. The church continues to be a vibrant and active part of Vörå parish, adapting to today's challenges while safeguarding its historical and architectural heritage. The anniversary year is sure to be celebrated with festivities and events that celebrate the importance of the Church to the region.

Its 200-year history is a valuable part of Ostrobothnia's cultural heritage and a reminder of the enduring importance of the local church in people's lives. When the bells ring from the old bell tower, the wings of history echo through Maxmo, reminding us of all the generations who have found comfort, inspiration and togetherness within these sacred walls.



Historical image: This picture of Maxmo church dates back to 1894 and can be found in the book *Finland in the 1800s*, which contains texts by Finnish authors and illustrations by Finnish artists and edited by Zacharias Topelius. The original version of the image has been digitized at the British Library.



FOOD

IN THE KITCHEN

The Egg-Boiling Dilemma

You'd think that if humanity can send a robot to Mars and build a phone that talks to your fridge, we could also figure out how to boil an egg properly. But no.

The boiled egg remains one of the kitchen's greatest mysteries—a culinary Bermuda Triangle: overcooked on one side, undercooked on the other, and something in the middle that makes you question if it's still food or the beginnings of a new life form.

But now—finally—science has stepped in.

Italian researchers have published an article in Communications Engineering that doesn't quite solve global crises, but it might just save your breakfast. According to them, the eternal contradiction inside the egg—the different ideal cooking temperatures of the white and the yolk—can now be solved... with physics.

Egg Diplomacy

As any egg enthusiast knows, the white (albumen) sets best around 80°C, while the yolk prefers a gentler 65°C. This creates the classic egg problem: how to cook both perfectly when you can't separate them without medical training and a pair of tweezers?

The answer: periodic boiling.

Thermal Spa for Eggs

The researchers suggest a sort of dynamic bath. You take your egg and dip it alternately in hot (100°C) and warm (30°C) water. Where a human would catch a cold and file a complaint, the egg thrives. The white firms up to perfection, while the yolk remains soft and dreamy—like a Sunday morning hug from a Michelin-starred chef.

Science in the Kitchen (and on the Table)

The study involved mathematical modeling, FTIR spectroscopy, and sensory analysis—because nothing says “delicious breakfast” like Fourier transforms and lab coats. But the result? The perfect egg. No rubbery whites, no slimy centers, no grey-edged trauma. Just ideal textures for both layers.

A Future Full of Eggs

This might seem like a small step for mankind, but it's a giant leap for brunch culture. It opens the door to a future where eggs aren't boiled with guesswork or superstition, but with elegant scientific precision. Perhaps the egg boilers of tomorrow will come with AI that calculates shell conductivity, water convection, and the yolk's existential hesitancy to achieve culinary nirvana.

In Conclusion

So next time you boil an egg, remember: you're not just in a kitchen. You're in



a lab. You're not a hapless amateur—you're a pioneer in the thermodynamics of breakfast. What you hold is not just food—it's a biological structure that deserves science, art, and thermal respect.

Or... you could just toss the egg in boiling water and hope for the best.

But where's the scientific thrill in that?

And here You will find the facts behind this text::

Di Lorenzo, Emilia,

Francesca Romano, Lidia Ciriaco, Nunzia Iaccarino, Luana Izzo, Antonio Randazzo, Pellegrino Musto, and Ernesto Di Maio. 2025. "Periodic Cooking of Eggs". Communications Engineering 4 (1): 5. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44172-024-00334-w>.

DISPUTATION

UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

»Pornography – Sin or Pleasure?« Groundbreaking Study from University of Eastern Finland Reveals Christians' Complex Relationship With Porn

In a surprising revelation, actively religious Finnish Christians consume pornography at remarkably high rates despite considering it morally wrong and sinful, according to a pioneering doctoral dissertation by MTh Pia Rendic at the University of Eastern Finland. This contradiction causes deep shame and spiritual distress among believers, the study finds.

Young Religious Women Emerge as Unexpected Active Users

The research, surveying over 500 self-identified Christian porn consumers, uncovered striking gender patterns:

Young women actively involved in church life were overrepresented among regular users

Primary reason for initial use: curiosity and sexual interest (68%)

Most common reason for continued use: masturbation (82%)

Only 12% reported porn improved their relationship

»The most unexpected find-

ing was how many young women regularly view porn despite knowing it conflicts with their faith,» Rendic reveals.

Moral Anguish and Relationship Strains

The study documents pornography's psychological and social impacts:

Internal conflict: 89% experienced guilt after use

Relationship effects: 76% reported negative intimacy consequences

Religious conflict: 68% felt like »worse Christians» due to porn use

»Many become trapped in a cycle of temporary abstinence followed by relapse,» Rendic explains.

The Church's Silent Crisis – New Approaches Needed

Rendic's findings identify critical needs:

Churches must develop more contemporary support methods

Religious communities require better sex education

Porn addiction prevention



should become part of diaconal work

»When 40% sought professional help for porn-related issues but only 8% turned to their congregation, we have a clear problem,» Rendic states.

Dissertation Sparks Necessary Dialogue

The public defense will occur on May 16, 2025 at the Joensuu campus, with live streaming available. Professor Marjo Kolehmainen from University of Turku

serves as the opponent.

»This research breaks taboos and provides tools for more constructive dialogue about sexuality in religious contexts,» says Professor Kati Tervo-Niemelä, the dissertation supervisor.

The study forms part of UEF's broader examination of religion in modern soc

Source: University of Eastern Finland

CLIMATE CHANGE

Copernicus: Second-warmest April globally – Global temperature still more than 1.5 °C above pre-industrial



The latest climate data from the ERA5 reanalysis reveals that April 2025 was the second-warmest April on record, with global surface air temperatures averaging 14.96 °C—0.60 °C above the 1991-2020 baseline and a staggering 1.51 °C above pre-industrial levels.

This marks 21 out of the last 22 months where global temperatures have surpassed the critical 1.5 °C threshold, a key indicator of accelerating climate change under the Paris Agreement.

While April 2025 was 0.07 °C cooler than the record-brea-

king April 2024, it still edged out 2016 as the third-warmest April ever recorded. More concerning is the broader trend: the 12-month period from May 2024 to April 2025 averaged 1.58 °C above pre-industrial levels, reinforcing fears that the world is inching closer to sustained, dangerous warming.

A Persistent Climate Emergency

The repeated breaches of the 1.5 °C benchmark—once considered a long-term warning signal—now reflect a near-permanent state of climate disruption. Scientists caution that while natural variability (such as El Niño) has contributed to recent spikes, the underlying driver re-

mains human-induced greenhouse gas emissions.

The oceans, too, are feeling the heat. Rising sea surface temperatures (SSTs) amplify extreme weather, from intensified hurricanes to marine heatwaves that devastate ecosystems. Coral bleaching, disrupted fisheries, and coastal flooding are no longer distant threats—they are today's reality.

A Call for Urgent Action

These findings underscore the urgent need for deeper emissions cuts and accelerated adaptation measures. While some datasets may show slight variations in monthly anomalies, the overarching trend is undeniable:

the planet is warming at a perilous rate.

The data paints a grim picture—we are living in a climate crisis, not preparing for one. The near-consistent overshoot of the 1.5 °C limit suggests that global efforts to curb emissions remain woefully inadequate. Policymakers must treat these temperature anomalies not as statistical fluctuations but as a final warning. Delaying action ensures more irreversible damage, from collapsing ice sheets to uninhabitable regions. The time for half-measures is over; the era of radical climate intervention has begun.

WELFARE REGION

Ostrobothnia Welfare Region Reforms Healthcare Access – Treatment Now Available at Other Health Centers Too



Starting this fall, residents of our region will have significantly more flexibility in accessing healthcare services.

A new reform by the welfare region will allow patients to receive short-term care at any health station or social and healthcare center in the region if their usual facility has long wait times. The changes will take effect by September 1, 2025, aiming to speed up access to care and improve service availability.

Shorter Wait Times – Care Available Beyond Home or Workplace

Under the new system, patients can seek treatment at the nearest

available health center if their usual location has extended queues. However, this applies only to short-term care, such as acute illnesses or pain management. Long-term illness treatment, maternity care, and child health clinic services will remain with the patient's regular provider, as continuity of care is crucial in these areas.

– This is a change that patients have been asking for. Now, a single health issue can be addressed, for example, at a health station near your workplace if appointments are available there sooner, says Sofia Svartsjö, Director of Health Center Operations for the Pohjanmaa Welfare Region.

Staff Can Direct Patients to

Other Units for Faster Care

The reform also allows healthcare professionals to refer patients to another facility after assessing their needs—if wait times are shorter elsewhere. However, the distance must not exceed 50 kilometers, and patients retain the right to decline and wait for an appointment at their usual health station.

This change is now possible because the entire Pohjanmaa Welfare Region uses a unified patient record system, ensuring seamless information sharing between different units.

Booking Appointments Digitally or by Phone

Assessments for care needs

will continue via phone, either through the general health helpline at 06 218 9000 or the dental care line at 06 218 9100. In Kristinestad, assessments are conducted via 06 218 6019. Appointments can also be booked digitally, and the new digital healthcare reception system is already available to half of Pohjanmaa's residents.

Long-Term Care Facility Can Be Changed Every Six Months

Another major change allows patients to switch their long-term care or maternity clinic facility every six months—previously, this was possible only once a year.

RUSSIA

RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA

Evening with Vladimir Solovyov

The studio lights glared, hot and unforgiving, as Vladimir Solovyov adjusted his tie.

His face, usually animated with a theatrical intensity, was etched with a grim satisfaction. Tonight's show, *Evening with Vladimir Solovyov*, promised to be a particularly potent cocktail of anti-Western rhetoric. He surveyed the panel – a carefully curated collection of sycophants and hardliners, each eager to outdo the others in their denunciations of the West.

"Good evening, esteemed viewers," Solovyov boomed, his voice a low growl that resonated through the studio. "Tonight, we will expose the true face of the decadent West, the enemy of our great nation." He paused for effect, his eyes gleaming. The camera zoomed in, catching the glint of his gold cufflinks.

The show proceeded as usual. A montage of clips – selectively edited, of course – showed Western politicians in unflattering light, interspersed with images of protests and social unrest. Solovyov's commentary was a torrent of accusations, each more outlandish than the last.

"They are rotting from within!" he declared, pointing a finger at the screen. "Their moral decay is a testament to their failing empire. Their so-called values are nothing but a mask for their greed and hypocrisy."

One of the panelists, a retired general with a face like a granite cliff, chimed in: "They are envious of our strength, our resilience, our spiritual fortitude!"

Solovyov nodded vigorously. "Precisely! They fear our resurgence, our return to greatness. They will stop at nothing to undermine us, to weaken us, to destroy us. But we will not yield! We will not falter!" He slammed his fist on the table, causing a small stack of papers to jump.

Later in the show, a discussion turned to the alleged interference of Western intelligence agencies in Russia's internal affairs. Solovyov leaned forward conspiratorially. "They are pulling the strings, my friends! They are manipulating events, sowing discord, and attempting to destabilize our beloved Motherland!" He lowered his voice to a sinister whisper. "But we are watching them. We know their games. And we will expose



them all!"

The show ended with Solovyov's trademark flourish – a defiant declaration of Russia's strength and unwavering resolve, punctuated by patriotic music and images of Russian landscapes. The audience, a carefully selected group of loyal supporters, erupted in thunderous applause. Solovyov smiled, a chillingly serene expression that belied the venom he had just unleashed on the airwaves. Another night of sowing discord, another night of fueling

hatred, another night of successfully manipulating his audience, another night of work completed.

... This is a fictional story showing what a typical evening show with Vladimir Solovyov usually look like,

In his latest show he said: We do not want any ceasefire. We want you dead!

MEDVEDEV

Медведєв і ядерна загроза новим членам НАТО – порожні слова чи небезпечна ескалація?

Заступник голови Ради безпеки Росії Дмитро Медведєв знову виступив із загрозливими коментарями, спрямованими на нещодавно приєднані до НАТО Фінляндію та Швецію. У заяві, яку широко цитувало російське державне інформаційне агентство ТАСС 29 квітня, Медведєв попередив, що кожне нове членство в НАТО автоматично робить країну ціллю для російських збройних сил, "включаючи потенційні удари у відповідь і навіть ядерний компонент".

Медведєв також поставив під сумнів, яку безпеку насправді отримали Фінляндія та Швеція завдяки своєму членству в НАТО. Він стверджував, що їхній попередній позаблоковий статус надавав їм "певні міжнародні переваги" з огляду на їхнє геополітичне становище. Тепер, будучи частиною "блоку, який вороже налаштований щодо нас", вони, за словами Медведєва, "просто поставили себе на приціл наших збройних сил". Він завершив, стверджуючи, що це "політичні ігри", наслідки яких більшість людей не розуміє.

Аналіз: Риторична гра для внутрішнього споживання?

Важливо проаналізувати заяви Медведєва у світлі поточної геополітичної ситуації та його власної історії провокаційних висловлювань. Хоча до загроз, пов'язаних із застосуванням ядерної зброї, завжди слід ставитися серйозно, є кілька причин розглядати ці конкретні коментарі зі значною часткою скептицизму, принаймні з точки зору негайної ескалації.

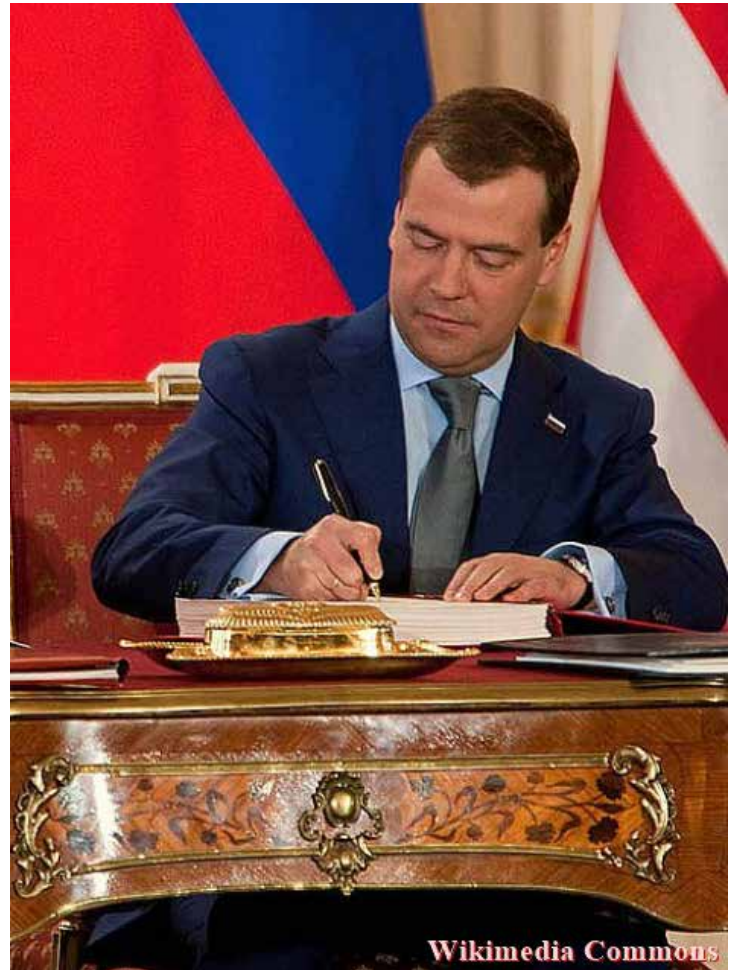
По-перше, Медведєв відомий своїм часом агресивним і вкрай риторичним стилем. Його заяви часто слугують меті сигналізувати про силу та стримування, насамперед спрямовані на внутрішню російську аудиторію, яку необхідно запевнити в рішучості країни щодо "Заходу". У російських державних ЗМІ розширення НАТО послідовно зображується як агресивний крок, що загрожує сфері безпеки Росії, і слова Медведєва сприяють цьому наративу.

По-друге, малоімовірно, що Росія наразі ініціює військовий напад на країну-члена НАТО, включаючи застосування ядерної зброї. Такий крок призведе до активації статті 5 Північноатлантичного договору, що передбачає колективну оборону всіх країн-членів. Наслідки такої ескалації будуть катастрофічними та значно переважають будь-які потенційні "вигоди", які Росія могла б собі уявити.

Безпека Фінляндії та Швеції зміцнилася завдяки НАТО

Всупереч твердженням Медведєва, рішення Фінляндії та Швеції подати заявку та отримати членство в НАТО радше впливає зі зростаючого почуття незахищеності в їхньому безпосередньому сусідстві, особливо після повномасштабного вторгнення Росії в Україну. Позаблоковий статус більше не забезпечував тієї безпеки, яка вважалася необхідною в умовах зміни безпекової політики.

Членство в НАТО передбачає значне зміцнення безпеки країн завдяки гарантії колективної оборони. Належність до найсильнішого військового альянсу світу стримує потенційних агресорів принципово іншим чином, ніж нейтральна позиція.



Wikimedia Commons

Хоча слова Медведєва спрямовані на створення тривоги та невизначеності, довгостроковий ефект, ймовірно, буде протилежним – подальша консолідація НАТО та підвищення усвідомлення необхідності стояти єдиним фронтом проти російської агресії.

Немає причин для паніки, але пильність потрібна

Підсумовуючи, останні заяви Дмитра Медведєва щодо того, що нові члени НАТО стають російськими цілями, не слід ігнорувати, але важливо контекстуалізувати їх. Вони, ймовірно, є частиною ширшої російської інформаційної війни та спробою психологічно вплинути на громадську думку у відповідних країнах та всередині НАТО.

Фінляндія та Швеція зробили суверенний вибір, виходячи з власних інтересів безпеки. Членство в НАТО є відповіддю на змінене та більш загрозливе безпекове середовище. Хоча загрозлива риторика з Москви є жалюгідною та неприйнятною, наразі немає жодних ознак неминучої військової ескалації проти країн НАТО. Однак, вирішальне значення має те, щоб НАТО продовжувало демонструвати єдність і рішучість у своїй підтримці України та у власній обороні, що саме по собі є найсильнішою відповіддю на агресивну риторику Кремля. Слова Медведєва можуть цитуватися в російських газетах, але в ширшому глобальному контексті їм бракує тієї ваги та змісту, які б виправдовували паніку. Пильність і подальша підтримка України є ще важливішими.

HEALTHY DIET

Higher Intakes of Canola, Soybean, and Olive Oils Are Good for You. But Not Butter!



New Study Links Butter to Higher Mortality, While Plant-Based Oils Reduce Risk

A groundbreaking new study published in JAMA Internal Medicine reveals that consuming more plant-based oils—such as canola, soybean, and olive oil—is associated with a lower risk of death, while higher butter intake is linked to increased mortality. The research, led by Dr. Dong D. Wang and a team of scientists from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, provides strong evidence that replacing butter with healthier plant-based fats could significantly improve longevity.

Key Findings from the Study
The study analyzed dietary data from 221,054 participants across three large U.S. cohorts—the Nurses' Health

Study, the Nurses' Health Study II, and the Health Professionals Follow-up Study—tracking their health for up to 33 years. Key findings include:

Butter intake increases mortality risk: Those who consumed the most butter had a 15% higher risk of total mortality compared to those who ate the least. Butter was also linked to a 12% higher risk of cancer death.

Plant-based oils lower mortality risk: Higher intake of oils like canola, soybean, and olive oil was associated with a 16% lower risk of total death, an 11% lower risk of cancer death, and a 6% lower risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) death.

Substituting butter with plant oils has major benefits: Replacing just 10 grams per day of butter (about two teaspoons) with the same amount of plant-based oils was estimated

to reduce total mortality by 17% and cancer mortality by 17%.

Why Plant-Based Oils Are Healthier

Unlike butter, which is high in saturated fats, plant-based oils contain unsaturated fats, which have been shown to improve heart health, reduce inflammation, and lower the risk of chronic diseases.

Olive oil (rich in monounsaturated fats) has long been associated with Mediterranean diet benefits.

Soybean and canola oils provide omega-3 fatty acids, which may help protect against cancer and heart disease.

Expert Recommendations

Dr. Walter Willett, a senior author of the study and professor of epidemiology and nutrition at Harvard, emphasized:

"This study reinforces the im-

portance of choosing healthier fats. Swapping butter for plant-based oils like olive, soybean, or canola oil is a simple dietary change that could have a major impact on long-term health and longevity."

The findings support current dietary guidelines recommending the replacement of saturated fats (like butter) with unsaturated fats (like plant-based oils). For those looking to improve their diet, small changes—such as cooking with olive oil instead of butter—could lead to significant health benefits over time.

Reference:

Zhang Y, Chadaideh KS, Li Y, et al. "Butter and Plant-Based Oils Intake and Mortality." JAMA Intern Med. Published online March 6, 2025. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2025.0205

Kuva: AI:lla luotu kuvituskuva

WELFARE REGION

***Lääkärilehti* (Finnish Medical Journal): Psychiatric Waiting Lists Eliminated in Ostrobothnia**



New care model ensures immediate treatment – no delays, no change of doctor

The Ostrobothnia welfare region in Finland has achieved a breakthrough in psychiatric specialist care. By reforming the care process for patients with mood disorders and neuropsychiatric conditions, the region has successfully eliminated waiting lists – a result that stands out both regionally and nationally.

Previously, the situation was concerning. Nearly

half of the patients had to wait over six months for treatment, and the waiting time for neuropsychiatric assessments could extend up to two years. In spring 2024, the Regional State Administrative Agency demanded immediate corrective action. Now, less than a year later, Ostrobothnia has delivered: no queues, faster access to care, and more satisfied patients.

The key to success lay in a fundamental change in approach and organization. All unnecessary steps before treatment were removed, the role of the care coordinator was re-

defined, and patients are now assigned directly to a permanent multidisciplinary care team. Treatment begins without delay and continues without changing doctors.

The new model is built around comprehensive team-based assessment, an individual care and rehabilitation plan, continuous evaluation of treatment effectiveness, and a planned conclusion of care. This has led to better use of resources and reduced strain on staff.

What's particularly notable is that this reform was

implemented without additional resources or new staff. The improvement was achieved through structural reorganization and a shift in mindset. Patient satisfaction has increased as care is now timely and consistent.

Ostrobothnia's example proves that structural changes in psychiatry can produce tangible results. This experience could serve as a model for other regions struggling with similar challenges. Where delay and frustration once prevailed, there is now a functioning, patient-centered care system

HEALTH

Up to 11 million new HIV infections anticipated following cuts



By: Dann Okoth

[NAIROBI] Global deaths from HIV/AIDS and new infections could soar to levels unseen since the start of the century if planned funding cuts to foreign aid are sustained, undermining years of progress, experts warn.

A study published in the journal *The Lancet HIV* estimates there could be 4.4 million to 10.8 million additional new HIV infections by 2030 in low- and middle-income countries and 770,000 to 2.9 million HIV-related deaths in children and adults.

The administration of US President Donald Trump has severed support for humanitarian work worldwide—including withdrawing the US from the World Health Organization and freezing funding for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

"[We] will see it come back and we [will] see people dying the way we saw them in the 90s and in 2000s."

Winnie Byanyima, UNAID executive director

Other major international donors, such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, which together with the US, account for over 90 per cent of international aid, have also announced plans to implement sig-

nificant cuts to foreign aid.

Collectively, it could lead to a 24 per cent reduction in global international HIV funding by 2026, according to the researchers.

Progress unravelled

Historically, the US has been the largest contributor to the global HIV response, investing more than US\$100 billion through the PEPFAR since it was established in 2003.

However, cuts to PEPFAR and USAID-supported programmes have already severely disrupted access to essential HIV services, including for antiretroviral therapy and HIV prevention and testing, says Debra ten Brink of the Burnet Institute, Australia, co-lead author of the study.

"Looking ahead, if other donor countries reduce funding, decades of progress to treat and prevent HIV could be unravelled," she said.

"It is imperative to secure sustainable financing and avoid a resurgence of the HIV epidemic which could have devastating consequences, not just in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, but globally."

'Ten-fold increase'

Separately, the head of the UN agency coordinating the fight against HIV-AIDS warned that an additional 6.3 million people will die in the next four years, unless support is reinstated. This represents a "tenfold increase" from the 600,000 AIDS-related deaths recorded globally in 2023, she said.

"We will see a ... real surge in this disease," UNAIDS executive director Winnie Byanyima told journalists in Geneva on Monday (24 March).

"[We] will see it come back and we [will] see people dying the way we saw them in the 90s and in 2000s."

She also predicted an additional 8.7 million new infections—up from 1.3 million new infections globally in 2023.

Mathematical model

The authors of *The Lancet HIV* study used a mathematical model to estimate the effects of anticipated international aid reductions in 26 countries, including the immediate end to support from PEPFAR in all countries currently dependent on foreign aid to support programmes to diagnose and prevent HIV.

They found there could be between a 1.3- to six-fold increase in new infections for people at higher risk of acquiring HIV, compared to if funding levels remained as they were.

The greatest impact would likely be in Sub-Saharan Africa and among vulnerable populations, including people who inject drugs, sex workers, men who have sex with men, and children, according to the researchers.

They called for a multipronged approach to help offset the effects of sudden funding cuts and build long-term sustainability.

HIV integration

"Integrating HIV care with other primary healthcare services may improve efficiency and leverage shared resources," said Rowan Martin-Hughes, a senior researcher at Burnet Institute and co-author of the study.

He noted that in Vietnam, this integration along with health insurance to cover HIV services, centralising antiretroviral therapy procurement and mobilisation of domestic resources, has resulted in an increase in domestic financing of the HIV response from 32 per cent in 2013 to 52 per cent in 2022.

"Introducing a modest HIV-specific tax levy or incorporating HIV services into a broader health insurance mecha-

nism may provide additional domestic funding streams," he told SciDev.Net.

"Such measures, although challenging, have been successfully tried in some Sub-Saharan African countries."

In many countries, HIV services have existed separately from the rest of the government-funded health system, because of the international focus on the disease, Martin-Hughes explains, adding that healthcare workers, infrastructure, and other basic pillars of health systems in many resource-poor countries have been supported by HIV funding.

"These are the countries that are being most acutely affected by the immediate pausing of that aid," he said.

Angela Muvumba Sellström, senior researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute, believes the findings are credible.

She says the short-term result of the withdrawal of this much aid will be an increased disease burden on weak health infrastructure, especially in Africa.

"And of course, we expect large levels of deaths as people living with HIV and without access to medicine become more vulnerable to HIV-related illnesses," she told SciDev.Net.

She challenged international large-scale financing actors like the African Development Bank, World Bank and the IMF to commit more to financing for health and ease the debt burden by rescheduling payment for some African governments.

This piece was produced by SciDev.Net's Global desk.

This article was originally published on SciDev.Net. Read the original article.

CLIMATE CHANGE

HOT SUMMERS

THL Warns - Future Heatwaves Are Dangerous for Seniors: Prevention of Heat-Related Illnesses Should Be Prepared for in Advance Throughout the Country

The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) has raised serious concerns about the health effects of future heatwaves, particularly for the elderly and individuals with chronic illnesses.

With climate change, Finland is expected to experience increasingly frequent prolonged and oppressive heat periods, which at worst can lead to hundreds of additional hospital admissions and premature deaths. Therefore, THL emphasizes that welfare regions and municipalities must now wake up and take concrete actions to combat the harmful effects of heat well in advance of the summer season.

While sunny weather is often perceived as purely positive, prolonged and intense heat poses a real health risk. Those over 65 years of age and individuals with pre-existing chronic diseases are particularly vulnerable to severe health problems. Infants and young children, pregnant women, and those performing physically demanding work in hot conditions also belong to risk groups. It is therefore crucial that society as a whole understands the potential dangers of heat and takes preventive measures.

Preparedness of Social and Healthcare Services Is Key
According to THL, a large proportion of deaths associated with heatwaves occur precisely in hospital wards and health center inpatient departments, where the most vulnerable individuals are cared for.

Therefore, it is essential for care institutions and 24/7 care units to assess the risks that hot weather can pose to patients, residents, staff, and the overall operation. It is also of utmost importance to prepare clear and written instructions for staff on how to effectively prevent the harmful effects of heat.

One central measure is to prevent the overheating of premises. Expert Virpi Kollanus from THL emphasizes that passive cooling methods, such as solar shading for windows and ventilation of spaces at night, may not always suffice. In such cases, hospitals and care units should strive for mechanical cooling to protect the most vulnerable patients and residents from extreme heat.

Preparedness should not be limited to enclosed spaces. Open care services and emergency departments within social and healthcare also need to be ready for the potential strain caused by heat periods. Clients of open care services should be informed well in advance about how to prevent heat-related illnesses so that they know how to protect themselves in their own homes.

The Role of Municipalities in Preventing Heat-Related Illnesses

Municipalities also have a significant role in preventing heat-related illnesses, especially through the planning of urban environments and the operations of daycare centers and schools. It is paramount

to prevent the overheating of premises and adapt to heat, particularly in these important environments for children and young people.

Kollanus stresses that daycare centers and schools need to think about safe operating practices during heat in advance and prepare written instructions for staff. This ensures that children and young people can spend summer days safely and healthily.

In addition, municipalities should invest in the planning of outdoor areas to create sufficient shaded areas using various structures, sun protection, and vegetation. This allows for outdoor activities even on the hottest days without excessive exposure to the sun.

Occupational Safety and Authority Supervision

Preventing heat-related illnesses and ensuring adequate sun protection are also important from an occupational safety perspective, especially in outdoor work. Employers must ensure that employees have sufficient opportunities to protect themselves from heat.

Valvira (the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health) has emphasized in its guidance that health protection authorities should closely monitor thermal conditions in 24/7 care units of social welfare, daycare centers, schools, and housing during heatwaves. This ensures that at-risk groups live and reside in healthy and safe conditions even in hot weather.

Long-Term Solutions in Urban Environment Planning

In the long term, municipalities can significantly combat heat-related illnesses through strategic urban environment planning. Green and water construction, surface materials that reflect solar radiation, shading structures, and solutions that promote ventilation in the urban environment are all important ways to adapt to a changing climate and its challenges.

National Action Plan Under Preparation

Climate change and the aging population together significantly increase the risk of heat-related illnesses in Finland in the coming decades. Therefore, the need for societal preparedness is constantly growing. Preventing harmful effects requires planned and rapid action, and in the long term, efforts should be made to prevent the overheating of buildings in particular.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health established a working group in February this year to promote this work. The task of the working group is to prepare a national action plan to prevent the harmful health effects of heat in Finland. Virpi Kollanus, who chairs the working group, says that the aim of the action plan is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of different actors in heat preparedness and to guide the implementation of preparedness measures in welfare regions and municipalities.

CLIMATE EFFORTS

VAASA

City of Vaasa Invites Companies and Organizations to Join Climate Efforts



The City of Vaasa is launching a new initiative to accelerate the path toward a carbon-neutral future. Through the Vaasa Climate Commitment, businesses and organizations in the region are challenged to take concrete steps toward sustainability and demonstrate their commitment to climate action.

The aim is to build strong cooperation, with each partner setting its own climate goals, openly reporting on progress, and inspiring others to follow suit. Companies and organizations that have already joined include major players such as Westenergy, Danfoss, Wärtsilä, VEO, Port of Vaasa, Stormossen, and Visit Vaasa. “We welcome both pioneers and organizations just starting

their climate work. Together, we can create real impact,” says Johanna Punkari, Climate Expert at the City of Vaasa.

Participants are encouraged to implement practical measures such as improving recycling, promoting the circular economy, enhancing energy efficiency, and developing sustainability reporting. Every action, no matter how small, makes a difference.

Organizations can join by registering on the city’s website or by contacting Project Manager Hanna Malkamäki at VASEK or Johanna Punkari at the City of Vaasa.

“It’s easy to get involved, and every action helps us move closer to a more sustainable Vaasa,” Malkamäki emphasizes.

Networking and Student

Support

The initiative is backed by VASEK, the University of Vaasa, and Vaasa University of Applied Sciences (VAMK). Students from both institutions will provide fresh expertise, assisting companies in setting and developing climate targets through project work and theses.

“This offers students valuable real-world experience while providing companies with concrete support in their climate efforts,” says Mirja Andersson, Lecturer at VAMK.

Taina Tukiainen, Research Director at the University of Vaasa, highlights the importance of evidence-based methods: “We are studying how climate budgeting and agreement-based models can lead to more effective and equitable solutions. Through science and collaboration, we are building a more

sustainable future for Vaasa.”

A Shared Goal for Carbon Neutrality

Vaasa aims to achieve carbon neutrality during this decade, a target that requires collective action from businesses, residents, and other stakeholders. The main sources of emissions—traffic, heating, electricity consumption, and waste—are areas where everyday choices make a significant impact.

Through initiatives like the Vaasa Climate Commitment and close cooperation with the region’s strong energy technology cluster, the city aims to promote sustainable development while also strengthening the competitiveness of local businesses.

“Together, we are building a greener and stronger future,” concludes Johanna Punkari..

TRAFFIC

VAASA

Vaasa Leads the Way in Active Mobility: Comprehensive Investments Create Smoother and Safer Pedestrian and Cycling Routes



Image: City of Vaasa/Mikael Matikainen

The City of Vaasa continues its determined efforts to transform the city into a more accessible, safe, and inviting place for everyone who chooses to travel on foot or by bicycle.

This year's ambitious plan includes both innovative new projects and thorough upgrades to existing infrastructure, clearly signaling the city's commitment to sustainable and active mobility. With an investment representing 13 percent of the municipality's total expenditure on municipal engineering, the priority of pedestrian and cycling routes in urban development is underscored.

This year's only entirely new addition is the long-awaited cycle path along Kronvik Road. This project, with a total budget of EUR 1.6 million, of which EUR 400,000 is allocated for 2025, will complete an important link in the city's cycling network. Once the section is finished with its new asphalt surface and well-planned green areas, the entire route will offer a safe and pleasant thoroughfare for cyclists.

In parallel with the new development, the Roparnäs Road cycle path is undergoing a comprehensive and much-

needed improvement. On sections affected by frost damage, the underlying layers are being renewed, and the remaining part of the cycle path will receive a new, smooth asphalt surface. This two-year project, with a total cost of approximately EUR 900,000, of which EUR 500,000 is being invested this year, will significantly raise the standard and safety for the many who use this important cycle route daily.

Major renovations are also planned for the street area at Teir Road. Here, not only will the street structures and stormwater drains be thoroughly renewed, but parking arrangements will also be reorganized with a clear focus on improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. This comprehensive upgrade is estimated to cost EUR 800,000 and will contribute to a more harmonious and functional urban environment.

A specific project is the reconstruction of the paper bridge in Metviken. The existing bridge is deemed to be in poor condition and also too narrow for safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists. Therefore, the city has decided to demolish the old structure and build a new, wider, and safer bridge in its place. The construction work for this project, with a budget of EUR 250,000, half of which is covered by state subsidies, will be put out to tender to ensure a cost-

effective and high-quality solution.

The City of Vaasa's innovative collaboration model, the cycling alliance, continues to generate positive results. Through close cooperation between the city, planners, and contractors, the alliance has, during its two years of operation, been able to implement projects cost-effectively and to a high standard. A shining example is the renewal of Sandö Road, which was transformed into an inviting environment for both pedestrians and cyclists at a significantly lower cost than initially estimated. Project Engineer Samuli Huusko emphasizes that the cost per square meter for Sandö Road was EUR 173, well below the original estimate of an index-adjusted EUR 195 per square meter. In addition, the city received a state subsidy of approximately EUR 900,000 for this successful project. Huusko also addresses incorrect media reports about the costs and clarifies that the price per meter of cycle path was actually a fraction of what was claimed.

Although the cycling alliance will not undertake any entirely new construction projects this year, the important planning and road maintenance work continues. The planned improvements for this year are somewhat smaller in scope, and an extremely high level of quality is not being pursued in all

details. For example, the amount reserved for the improvement of Teir Road has been reduced by 20 percent, which may be noticeable in the finishing of the surfaces.

The deliberate investments in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in Vaasa have already yielded clear results. The enhanced winter maintenance of pedestrian and cycling routes has received much positive feedback, even at the national level. User satisfaction has increased significantly due to the high standard of winter maintenance, from 2.98 to an impressive 4.32 on a scale of 1–5. In addition, the number of people traveling on foot or by bicycle during the winter months this year increased by approximately 25 percent compared to the previous winter. This clearly underscores that Vaasa's strategic investments in active mobility not only create a smoother and safer city but also encourage more residents to choose sustainable modes of transport. With these continued investments, Vaasa is solidifying its position as a leader in promoting pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Source: City of Vaasa

NATURE

Finland's Spiders Finally Get Finnish Names – Collaboration Facilitates Easier Observation and Research!



A historic moment has arrived for Finland's spider world! The Finnish Spider Working Group, together with enthusiastic spider enthusiasts, has undertaken extensive work and created Finnish names for all spider species occurring in the country.

This significant effort has yielded results, with a remarkable 644 spider species, as well as a few species found in neighboring countries, now having official Finnish names.

This new, unified nomenclature is a real cause for joy for researchers, hobbyists, and anyone interested in nature. Previously, referring to many spider species was only possible with cumbersome Latin scientific names. Now, making and communicating species observations will be significantly easier, as there is a clear Finnish name for every species.

The updated names are now available in the Finnish Biodiversity Information Facility's comprehensive laji.fi database.

It is wonderful to note that even the previously lesser-known and perhaps by some even considered frightening or repulsive spiders have now received their own Finnish names. Familiar species groups, such as plants, mammals, and butterflies, have had Finnish names for a long time, which is natural. Now, this disparity has been rectified for spiders, opening up entirely new possibilities for species identification, hobby activities, and research.

Researcher Riikka Elo from the Biodiversity Unit of the University of Turku, who has served as the secretary of the Spider Working Group, emphasizes the great need for a unified nomenclature. She explains how Latin names have been difficult to remember, and many hob-

byists have already developed their own nicknames for the creatures they have observed. Now, this creativity has been given an official and unifying foundation.

Special thanks for this historic reform go to the active enthusiasts whose desire for the development of the nomenclature initiated the process. In particular, the immense groundwork of Markku A. Huttunen has been invaluable. His idea of replacing the long word "hämähäkki" (spider) with the suffix "-kki" has proven to be a functional and natural solution. Spider expert Niclas Fritzén from the Ostrobothnia Australis association explains that previously, only just under a hundred species had an established Finnish name, and even those were often long and difficult to remember.

The long-term work on updating the nomenclature has borne fruit. The first new names were published ten years ago

in Pajarre's work "Hämikki ja seitsemän seittiä" (The Spider and Seven Webs). The book "Suomen hyppyhämähäkit" (Finland's Jumping Spiders), published in 2022, also received Finnish names for all 44 species in the jumping spider family (Salticidae) through the working group's contribution. Now, this groundbreaking work has been completed, and all of Finland's spiders have finally been named in Finnish. The new nomenclature has also been approved by the Nomenclature Committee of the Finnish Entomological Society, which confirms its official status.

These new, short, and clear names have now been stored in the laji.fi database, and they can be used in the future alongside the old scientific names. This is a huge step forward in increasing the knowledge and appreciation of Finland's spiders!

Source: Turun yliopisto

HEALTH

WHO

Historic Breakthrough: World Unites to Strengthen Pandemic Preparedness – WHO Member States Agree on New Accord



Member states of the World Health Organization (WHO) have reached a significant and historic agreement on a new pandemic preparedness treaty.

Following lengthy and complex negotiations, a consensus was finally reached on April 16, 2025, and the agreement is expected to receive its formal seal of approval at the WHO's World Health Assembly in May. This accord marks a critical step towards global cooperation and readiness in the face of future pandemic threats and other international health challenges.

Outi Kuivasniemi, Counsellor for International Affairs and Chair of Finland's negotiation delegation, describes the outcome as a balanced compromise that reflects member states' shared commitment to building a more equitable and sustainable global health system. It is particularly positive that the agreement includes new

provisions regarding, among other things, the "One Health" concept, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health and the need for a holistic approach to managing health threats.

The background to this significant agreement lies in the decision made by the WHO's Special Session of the World Health Assembly in December 2021 to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Body. The task of this body was to prepare a comprehensive agreement on pandemic preparedness and response. The intergovernmental negotiations commenced in February 2022, and Finland actively participated in the process as part of the European Union. Finland's negotiation delegation included representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), underscoring the broad national importance of the issue.

The consensus now reached is a significant achievement for the in-

ternational community. Pandemics know no national borders, and the COVID-19 pandemic starkly demonstrated the world's vulnerability to sudden and rapidly spreading health threats. The new pandemic agreement aims to create stronger structures for information sharing, resource allocation, and joint action in crisis situations. This will not only strengthen preparedness to respond more effectively to future pandemics but also promote global health equity.

It is essential to note that the agreement clearly stipulates that it does not transfer national sovereignty to the WHO. Decision-making power in health matters remains with the member states, which has been an important principle for many countries during the negotiations. The aim of the agreement is precisely to strengthen international cooperation and coordination, not to weaken national self-determination.

The next step is the adoption of the agreement at the WHO's World Health Assembly in May 2025. The Assembly's decisions are

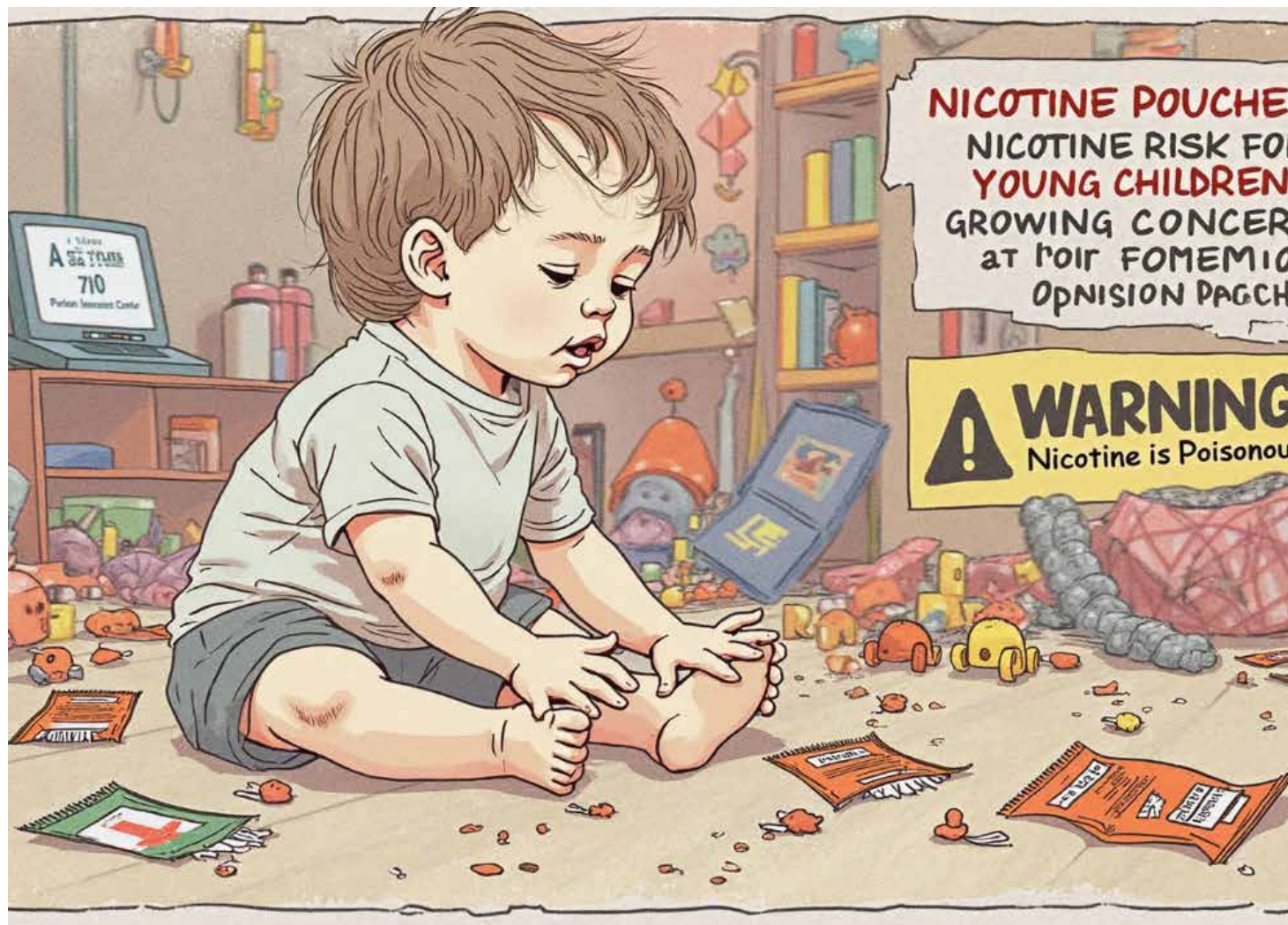
traditionally made by consensus, meaning that the support of all member states will be sought for the adoption of the pandemic agreement. Following this, each WHO member state will consider and commit to the agreement in accordance with its own constitutional framework.

This new pandemic agreement is an encouraging sign that the world's nations can unite their efforts in the face of a common threat and learn from past experiences. It offers hope that in the future, we will be better prepared to face global health challenges and protect the health and well-being of people around the world. The agreement is not merely a legal document; it is also a symbol of the importance of international solidarity and cooperation in ensuring the common security of humanity.

Image
World Health Organization Flag
Author United States Mission Geneva
Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license.:

HEALTH

Nicotine pouches pose poisoning risk for young children – growing concern at the Poison Information Center



Nicotine pouches are becoming an increasingly common cause of poisoning, with the Poison Information Center receiving nearly daily inquiries about them.

Young children are particularly vulnerable, as they may put nicotine pouches in their mouths while exploring their surrounding, according to the Finnish Medical Journal.

According to Chief Physician and Associate Professor Tuomas Lilius from the Poison Information Center, nicotine poisoning poses a real risk, especially for small children. "Concern is justified, as nicotine

is quickly absorbed through the mouth's mucous membranes and can cause symptoms within minutes," says Lilius. Typical symptoms of nicotine poisoning include stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, tremors, and rapid heartbeat. In severe cases, poisoning can lead to heart arrhythmias and seizures.

By September 2024, the Poison Information Center had received 325 calls about nicotine pouches, half of which involved children under two years old. Lilius emphasizes the responsibility of parents: "Nicotine pouches should be treated like chemicals or medicines – they must be kept out of children's reach."

Among teenagers and young adults, poisoning symptoms often result from overuse of nicotine pouches or accidentally swallowing one. In many cases, other substances are also involved.

Families are advised to keep activated charcoal at home, as it can prevent nicotine from being absorbed if a child swallows a pouch. Lilius also warns that while nicotine pouches sold in Finland are limited to a strength of 20 mg/g, stronger pouches are available from abroad, further increasing the risk.

The Poison Information Center is currently conducting studies on

the toxicity of nicotine pouches, as there is surprisingly little information about their danger.

Want to know more? Read Wasa Daily!

Those who are best informed are those who read Wasa Daily. With us, you always get the latest news, in-depth analysis and perspectives on what is happening both locally and globally. For those who want to know more – and understand more – Wasa Daily is the obvious choice.

Join us to stay up to date on what really matters.

EXHIBITION

Riding The Radio Waves - an interesting exhibition in Tampere Vapriikki-museo



A 15 W FM-transmitter used in pirate radio in Tampere in the 80ies



Commodore, the first computer for everyone in Finland

"On the crest of the radio wave – From crystal machine to podcast" opens up Finnish radio history from the 1920s to the present day

The Tampere Vapriikki Museum opens a fascinating exhibition that delves into the roots of Finnish radio history. "Riding the radio waves – From crystal machine to podcast" takes the visitor on an enchanting journey into the multifaceted history of radio. The exhibition delves into what has made radio enchanting for creators, listeners and enthusiasts for decades, and why this magical device has maintained its position in the age of the internet and digital communication.

Although radio may seem like a transitory format in today's media storms, it is still a globally significant means of communication. Internet access, mobile networks, electricity and access to digital information are not available everywhere in the world. Radio is also proving to be a valuable communication channel in crisis situations, as its network is designed to withstand longer power outages compared to, for example, mobile phone networks.

Radio amateurs, in particular, appear to be critical pillars of communication and communication in crisis situations. The exhibition invites the visitor to think about the magic that a device hidden on the radio manages to create, from everyday listening to necessary crisis connections. This unique exhibition offers an opportunity to delve into the history of radio and understand its continued importance as a versatile and sustainable means of communication. *en jatkuvan merkityksen monipuolisena ja kestäväenä viestintävälineenä.*



NEWS

MIGRI

Finland Streamlines Reception System as Asylum Numbers Decline. Oravais will close in December

THE FINNISH IMMIGRATION SERVICE (Migri) has announced the closure of multiple reception centres, including the Oravais facility in December, as the need for asylum accommodation continues to decrease.

Fewer Arrivals, More Local Integration

The decision follows a significant drop in asylum applications—down 45% in 2024 compared to the previous year. Additionally, the number of displaced Ukrainians seeking temporary protection has steadily declined. At the same time, an increasing number of reception centre residents have successfully transitioned to permanent municipal housing, reducing the demand for centralized accommodation.

Cost Efficiency Without Compromising Welfare

To maintain a financially sustainable reception system, Migri will terminate contracts with 18 reception centres by July, saving an estimated €21 million in 2025. A further eight centres will close by February 2026.

Elina Nurmi, Director of Reception Services, emphasized that the closures have been carefully timed:

“The first centres will not shut before the end of June, ensuring school-aged children can complete their academic year without disruption. Our priority remains the well-being of vulnerable groups, particularly minors.”

Pathway to Independence

Over 2,200 current residents are now eligible to apply for municipal residency, granting them the freedom to settle anywhere

in Finland. Nearly half could relocate immediately if they choose. Those not yet ready for independent living will be transferred to other reception centres, with Migri providing tailored support throughout the transition.

“We’re committed to a smooth process,” Nurmi added. “Each case will be assessed individually, and clients retain the option to move into private housing if preferred.”

A Shift in Finland’s Migration Landscape

This move reflects broader trends in migration—fewer new arrivals and greater emphasis on long-term integration. While the closures signify a reduction in immediate capacity, they also highlight the success of Finland’s resettlement policies in helping asylum seekers establish stable lives.

What’s next?

With further adjustments possible in 2026, Finland’s reception system appears poised for a more targeted, cost-effective future—one that balances fiscal responsibility with humanitarian commitments.

This rationalization was inevitable given the sharp decline in asylum seekers. However, the real test will be ensuring that those still in the system—particularly families and unaccompanied minors—receive adequate support as they transition to independence.

The €21 million savings are a win for taxpayers, but the human aspect of integration must remain a priority.

MIGRI

Фінляндія оптимізує систему прийому, оскільки кількість біженців зменшується. Oravais

ІМІГРАЦІЙНА СЛУЖБА ФІНЛЯНДІЇ (Migri) оголосила про закриття кількох центрів прийому, включаючи заклад Oravais, у грудні, оскільки потреба в притулках продовжує зменшуватися.

Менше прибуттів, більше локальної інтеграції

Це рішення послідувало за значним падінням кількості заявок на надання притулку — на 45% у 2024 році порівняно з попереднім роком. Крім того, кількість переміщених українців, які шукають тимчасового захисту, неухильно зменшується. У той же час, все більша кількість мешканців приймальних центрів успішно перейшли на постійне муніципальне житло, що зменшило попит на централізоване житло.

Економічна ефективність без шкоди для добробуту

Щоб підтримувати фінансово стійку систему прийому, Migri розірве контракти з 18 центрами прийому до липня, заощадивши приблизно 21 мільйон євро у 2025 році. Ще вісім центрів будуть закриті до лютого 2026 року.

Еліна Нурмі, директор служби прийому біженців, наголосила, що закриття було ретельно розплановано:

«Перші центри не закриватимуться до кінця червня, щоб діти шкільного віку могли завершити навчальний рік без збоїв. Нашим пріоритетом залишається благополуччя вразливих груп населення, особливо неповнолітніх».

Шлях до незалежності

Понад 2200 нинішніх жителів тепер мають право подати заявку на муніципальне проживання, що надає їм свободу проживання в будь-якому місці Фінляндії. Майже половина може переїхати негайно, якщо захоче. Ті, хто ще не готовий до самостійного життя, будуть переведені в

інші центри прийому, а Migri надаватиме індивідуальну підтримку протягом усього переходу.

“Ми прагнемо до безперервного процесу», — додав Нурмі. “Кожен випадок буде оцінюватися індивідуально, і клієнти зберігають можливість переїхати в приватне житло, якщо це бажано».

Зміни в міграційному ландшафті Фінляндії

Цей крок відображає ширші тенденції в міграції — менша кількість новоприбулих і більший акцент на довгостроковій інтеграції. Хоча закриття означає скорочення негайної пропускної здатності, воно також підкреслює успіх політики переселення Фінляндії у допомозі шукачам притулку налагодити стабільне життя.

Що далі?

З можливими подальшими коригуваннями у 2026 році система прийому у Фінляндії, схоже, готова до більш цілеспрямованого та економічно ефективного майбутнього — такого, яке збалансує фінансову відповідальність із гуманітарними зобов’язаннями.

Така раціоналізація була неминучою з огляду на різке зменшення кількості шукачів притулку. Однак справжнім випробуванням буде забезпечення того, щоб ті, хто все ще перебуває в системі, особливо сім’ї та неповнолітні без супроводу, отримували належну підтримку на шляху до незалежності.

Економія у розмірі 21 мільйона євро — це виграш для платників податків, але людський аспект інтеграції має залишатися пріоритетом.

PARTY DRUGS

Laughing gas epidemic: the hidden danger destroying young lives



"Living Made Easy": An 1830s satirical print depicting Humphry Davy giving a dose of nitrous oxide to a woman. Wikimedia Commons.

A SILENT BUT DEADLY TREND is sweeping through parties, festivals, and even schoolyards across the nation. Nitrous oxide, commonly known as "laughing gas," is being abused at record rates—and medical experts warn it could leave a generation with permanent nerve damage, paralysis, or even death.

The problem is already big in Sweden, and we usually follow in Sweden's footsteps here in Finland.

What Is Laughing Gas?

Nitrous oxide (N_2O) is a colorless, sweet-tasting gas that has legitimate medical uses as an anesthetic in dentistry and surgery. When used properly under medical supervision, it helps relieve pain and anxiety. However, outside the clinic, it has become a popular—and dangerously misunderstood—recreational drug.

From Medical Tool to Party Drug

Legally, nitrous oxide is classified as a pharmaceutical and should only be administered by trained professionals. Yet, it's alarmingly easy to obtain. The gas is sold in small metal canisters (often called "whip-pits") meant for whipping cream

in professional kitchens. These canisters are now being openly sold online and in shops, with little regulation.

The Shocking Rise in Abuse

According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), nitrous oxide has become one of the most commonly used recreational drugs among young adults in Europe, with use doubling in some countries since 2020. In the UK alone, hospital admissions linked to laughing gas have surged by 300% in the last five years (NHS Data, 2024).

The High—And the Horrific Crash When inhaled, laughing gas induces a brief but intense euphoria, dizziness, and uncontrollable laughter—hence its nickname. The effects last only 20-30 seconds, leading users to binge multiple canisters in one session. But what comes next is far from funny.

The Dark Side: Nerve Damage, Paralysis, and Death

While many dismiss it as "harmless fun," doctors are seeing an alarming spike in severe neurological damage caused by nitrous oxide abuse.

The gas destroys vitamin B12, a critical nutrient for nerve function. Without it, the nervous system begins to fail.

Symptoms of long-term abuse include:

- Tingling and numbness in hands and feet (early warning signs)
- Loss of bladder and bowel control (due to nerve damage)
- Paralysis in legs (from spinal cord deterioration)
- Psychosis and memory loss (in extreme cases)

A 19-year-old in the Netherlands was left wheelchair-bound after months of heavy use, his spinal nerves irreversibly damaged (Dutch Journal of Medicine, 2023). Another case in the UK saw a young woman permanently unable to walk after just six months of weekend use (BBC News, 2024).

A Warning to Young People: "It's Russian Roulette With Your Nerves"

Dr. Lisa Carter, a neurologist at King's College Hospital, has treated dozens of laughing gas victims. She warns:

"Young people think it's safe

because it's used in medicine. But medical doses are controlled. Recreational use is like playing Russian roulette with your nervous system. Once the damage is done, it's often permanent."

The Lethal Risk: Oxygen Deprivation

Beyond nerve damage, laughing gas can starve the brain of oxygen, leading to sudden death. In 2023, a 17-year-old girl in Germany died after inhaling nitrous oxide from a balloon and suffocating (Der Spiegel, 2023).

What's Being Done?

Some countries are cracking down. The UK recently banned recreational sales of nitrous oxide, imposing fines and jail time for possession. But enforcement remains difficult, and the black market is thriving.

Is 30 Seconds of Laughter Worth a Lifetime of Regret?

The message from doctors is clear: Laughing gas is no joke. What starts as a "harmless high" can end in a wheelchair—or worse.

If you or someone you know is using nitrous oxide recreationally, STOP NOW. The next balloon could be the one that changes your life forever.

If you are worried about yourself or someone close to you:

- Substance abuse counselling 0800 900 45

Environmental impact – not just health risks

- Nitrous oxide is a powerful greenhouse gas (300 times more potent than carbon dioxide)

SOURCES:

- EMCDDA (2024) - European Drug Report
- NHS England (2024) - Hospital Admission Statistics
- Dutch Journal of Medicine (2023) - Case Study on Spinal Damage
- BBC News (2024) - "The Laughing Gas Crisis"
- Der Spiegel (2023) - Fatal Nitrous Oxide Case

ART

HELENE SCHJERFBECK

Helene Schjerfbeck Exhibition Comes to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York – A Historic First for Finnish Art

Ateneum Art Museum | News |
April 2, 2025

A LANDMARK MOMENT in Finnish art history is approaching as the works of Helene Schjerfbeck will be displayed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) in New York from December 5, 2025, to April 5, 2026. This marks the first time a Finnish artist has been granted a dedicated exhibition at one of the world's most prestigious art museums. The showcase is the result of long-term collaboration between the Ateneum Art Museum and the Klassikot maailmalle (Classics to the World) initiative, supported by the Jane and Aatos Erkko Foundation.

A Dream Come True for Finnish Art

"This is a dream come true—not just for me but for Finnish art as a whole. The Met is in a league of its own, and it's an incredible honor that Helene Schjerfbeck's works will grace its walls," says Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, Director of the Ateneum Art Museum.

The exhibition spans Schjerfbeck's (1862–1946) entire career, from her early academic works to her introspective late self-portraits. Over 60 pieces will be on display, including portraits, still lifes, and landscapes, featuring iconic works such as *The Convalescent* (1888), *The Seamstress* (1905), and a series of self-portraits. A speci-

Helene Schjerfbeck: Self-Portrait with a Black Background (1915). Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum, Hallonblad Collection. Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Yehia Eweis.

al highlight is *The Lace Collar* (1920), acquired by The Met in 2023—the first work by a Finnish artist to enter the museum's collection.

International Collaboration and Contemporary Art Spotlight

The exhibition will be held in The Met's Robert Lehman Wing, curated by Dita Amory, with Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff serving as consulting curator. A comprehensive exhibition catalog, including an essay by von Bonsdorff, will accompany the showcase.

Alongside Schjerfbeck's retrospective, Finnish con-

temporary art will also take center stage in New York. The *Remix the Archive* exhibition (May–June 2025) will feature generative art created using open-access data from the Finnish National Gallery's collections, including the award-winning *Loom of Reality* by Ilmo and Aarni Kapanen.

Finnish Art's Global Reach

Schjerfbeck's works have previously captivated international audiences, with a celebrated 2019 exhibition at London's Royal Academy of Arts and a 2014–2016 tour across Japan and Germany.

The Klassikot maailmalle project continues to bring Finnish masters to global audiences: a Pekka Halonen exhibition will open at Paris's Petit Palais in November 2025, following the recent Akseli Gallen-Kallela showcase at Vienna's Belvedere Museum.

Who Was Helene Schjerfbeck?

Schjerfbeck developed a distinctive modern style, stripping her paintings of unnecessary detail. Her self-portraits—painted from youth to old age—reveal a profound artistic journey. The Ateneum holds the world's largest Schjerfbeck collection, with over 200 works.



BOOKS

HISTORICAL LITERATURE

Karl August Tavaststjerna: Nobleman

A romantic in the whirlwind of hard times

Hårda tider will be published by Wasa Daily

KARL AUGUST TAVASTSTJERNA, the controversial and great star of Finland-Swedish literature, was born in 1860 into a noble family in the municipality of Mikkeli. Already in her childhood, he experienced the shadows of upper-class life, when her mother died of typhoid fever while caring for beggars during the famine years. This tragic event made an indelible impression on the young Karl August, which was later reflected in his works.

The road to school was rocky. After his father's death, he was placed under the guardianship of Colonel Constantin Ruin, and his studies at the Helsinki Polytechnic School did not inspire him much. He longed to return to the Parisian art scene, but eventually returned to Finland disappointed. After this, however, his literary career began to flourish.

Tavaststjerna was a controversial figure, a "patriot of the fatherland" who hated the intellectual atmosphere and language battles in Finland. He thirsted for international recognition and moved around in Parisian artistic circles, but at the same time he depicted the conflicts and injustices of Finnish society in his works. The novel *Hårda tider*, (Hard Times) (1891) is a brutal depiction of the famine years of the 1860s, where noble romanticism collides with grim reality.

Tavaststjernas pen was sharp and satirical. He did not shy away from depicting the dark side of society, and his work aroused much discussion in his time. He was a realist who did

not embellish reality, but at the same time he had the soul of a romantic who longed for beauty and harmony.

Tavaststjerna's book *Hårda tider* and the Finnish translation *Kovina aikoina* will be published on Wasa Daily's website.

His life came to a tragic end in Pori in 1898, only 37 years old. According to the story, instead of medicine, she was given a lethal dose of lamp oil, according to other sources, it was a nurse's mistake. This seemingly absurd death is the end of his contradictory life.

The legacy of Tavaststjerna lives on in Finland-Swedish literature. His works are timeless depictions of the role of man in difficult times, and his satirical pen continues to scratch the surface of society. He was a noble romantic who dared to look reality in the eye and describe its brutality.

His book *Hårda tider* is a milestone in Finnish literature that depicts the misery and despair of the famine years. Häme-star does not spare the reader, but shows the horrible face of hunger, disease and death. He also describes people's desperate attempts to survive and even exploit each other. The book is a harsh depiction of the time



Karl August Tavaststjerna (1860-1898) Wikimedia Commons when Finland was a poor and hungry country.

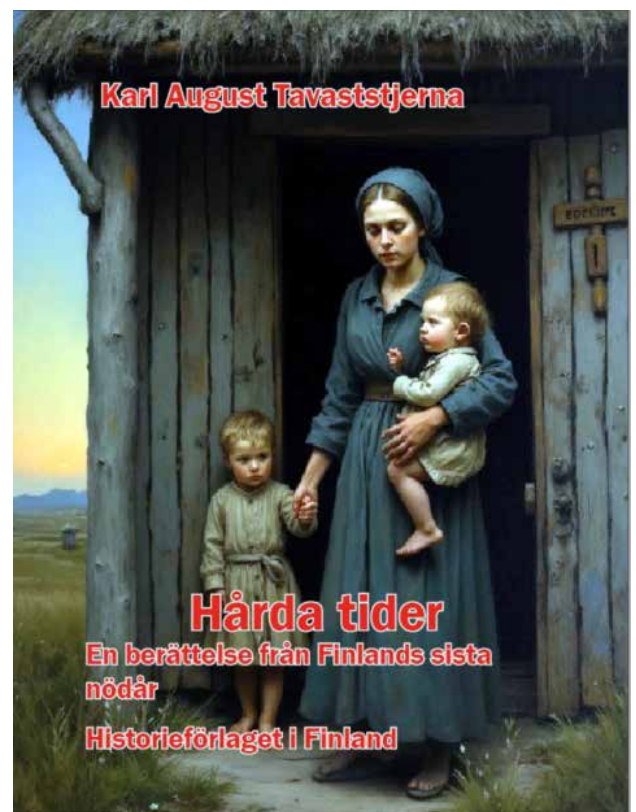
Tavaststjerna's humour was black and sarcastic. He mocked the hypocrisy of the nobility and the greed of the bourgeoisie. He did not mince words, and his works are full of sharp

observations and apt comparisons. He was a writer who dared to laugh even at serious things.

Tavaststjerna was also very talented. He wrote poems, plays, and novels, and he was also a skilled journalist. He started his own newspaper, but it was not financially successful. He was a visionary who wanted to change the world, but he also had a realistic understanding of its brutality.

Karl August Tavaststjerna was a controversial and fascinating figure who left an indelible mark on Finland-Swedish literature. His works are still relevant today, and they are still read and studied.

He was a noble romantic who dared to look reality in the eye and describe its brutality.



BOOK

Rediscovered classic offers new insight into today's society

Wasa Dagblad has translated "1984"

into Swedish and the book can be read on the newspaper's website: www.vpress.ovh. The English version is also ready-

In an era marked by digital surveillance and the influence of social media, George Orwell's novel "1984" has gained new relevance. Although the book was written in 1948, long before the internet and smartphones, its depiction of a totalitarian society is frighteningly relevant.

The novel, which takes place in a dystopian future, describes a society where the state controls every aspect of citizens' lives. Through advanced surveillance and manipulation of information, the regime maintains its power and creates an atmosphere of fear and suspicion.

"It is fascinating how pinpoint-accurate Orwell was in his description of a surveillance society," says a well-known literary critic. "Although technology has developed enormously since 1948, the

underlying mechanisms for control and manipulation are still the same."

In "1984," the state uses "telescreens" to monitor citizens 24/7. In today's society, we have surveillance cameras, internet tracking, and facial recognition. Although these technologies are often justified on security grounds, they raise questions about privacy and civil liberties.

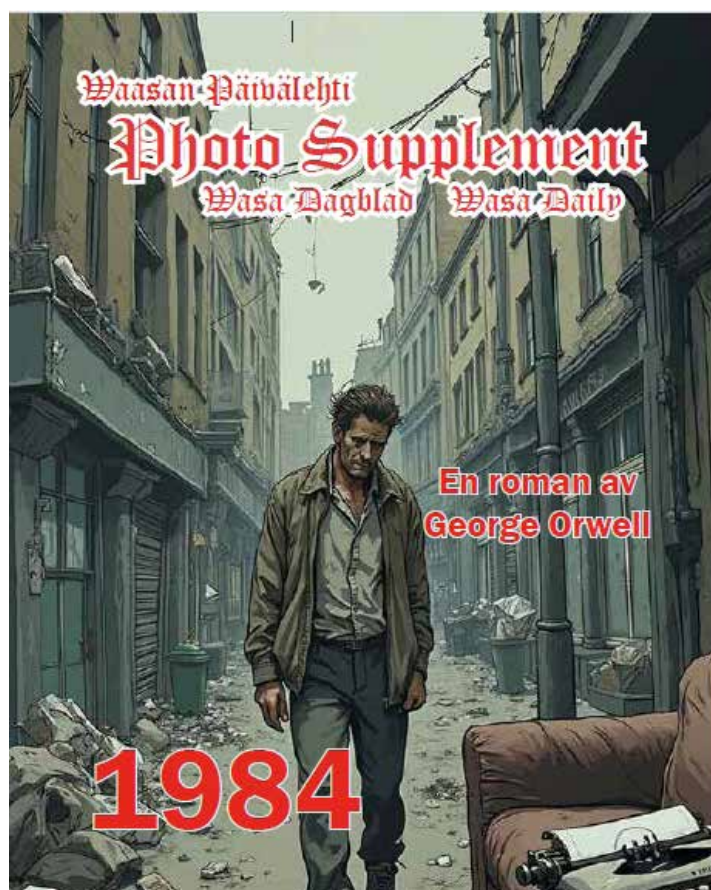
Orwell also depicts how the state uses "newspeak" to limit citizens' ability to think and control their perception of reality. By eliminating words that express opposition and criticism, the regime creates a language that makes it impossible to think "non-authoritarian" thoughts.

"It is a frightening thought that language can be used as a tool of control. In today's society, we see how politicians and the media use 'spin' and 'fake news' to manipulate public opinion. Orwell's newspeak may not be so far from our own reality."

"1984" is not only a warning against totalitarianism, but also a reminder of the impor-



George Orwell (1903 - 1950). Wikimedia Commons



tance of safeguarding freedom of expression, privacy, and critical thinking. In a time when these values are being challenged, Orwell's novel is more relevant

than ever.

'1984' can be recommended to everyone. It is a book that makes you think about our own time and the challenges we face.

RUSSIA'S UNPROVOKED ATTACK ON UKRAINE

The Budapest memorandum

Budapest Memorandum 1994: Upholding Ukraine's Borders

In the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine found itself at a pivotal moment in its history, charting a course towards independence and sovereignty. Among the agreements that emerged during this transformative period, the Budapest Memorandum stands out as a symbol of international commitment to safeguarding Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Signed in 1994, the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances was a landmark diplomatic pact involving Ukraine, Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. At its core lay a crucial promise: the signatories pledged to respect the sovereignty and existing borders of Ukraine, reaffirming their commitment to the principles of non-aggression and refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine.

The memorandum represented a significant diplomatic achievement for Ukraine, offering reassurance in a time of uncertainty and vulnerability. It provided a framework for Ukraine's security and stability, underpinned by the collective assurances of major global powers.

However, the Budapest Memorandum's significance would be tested in the years to come, particularly in the context of Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its ongoing involvement in the conflict in eastern Ukraine. These events underscored the complexities and challenges of international diplomacy, raising questions about the efficacy of agreements like

the Budapest Memorandum in a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape.

In the aftermath of Russia's actions, there were calls for the signatories of the Budapest Memorandum to honor their commitments and take concrete steps to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Yet, the response from the international community remained varied, reflecting divergent interests and geopolitical calculations.

For Ukraine, the Budapest Memorandum served as both a source of hope and frustration. While it represented a vital pillar of its security architecture, the failure of some signatories to uphold their obligations highlighted the limitations of diplomatic assurances in the face of determined aggression.

Despite these challenges, the Budapest Memorandum endures as a symbol of international solidarity and the imperative of upholding the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Its legacy serves as a reminder of the enduring importance of diplomacy in resolving conflicts and advancing peace and security in an interconnected world.

Russia Disrespected the Budapest Memorandum

The Budapest Memorandum of 1994 was an agreement between Russia, Ukraine, the United States, and the United Kingdom. In the agreement, Russia pledged to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including its borders. The memorandum was a significant milestone in shaping European security after the fall of the Soviet Union.

However, Russia has failed to uphold its

commitments under the Budapest Memorandum. In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea, a peninsula belonging to Ukraine. In 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, resulting in a humanitarian crisis and thousands of casualties.

Several reasons explain Russia's disregard for the Budapest Memorandum. Firstly, Russia has long held an imperialist view of Ukraine. It considers Ukraine part of its "historical sphere of influence" and has opposed Ukraine's aspirations to become an independent democratic nation.

Secondly, Russia has become increasingly authoritarian in recent years. President Vladimir Putin has consolidated power and cracked down on any dissent. This makes it difficult for Russia to cooperate with other countries in good faith.

Thirdly, Russia holds a revisionist view of international law. It believes it has the right to use force to achieve its goals, even if it violates international laws and norms.

Russia's breaches of the Budapest Memorandum have severe consequences for European security. It demonstrates that Russia is not a reliable partner and is willing to use violence to achieve its objectives. This has heightened tensions in Europe and complicated the construction of a stable and peaceful security order.

The international community must respond decisively to Russia's violations of the Budapest Memorandum. Russia needs to be held accountable for its actions, and there must be clear repercussions for its aggression. Additionally, the international community needs to work towards supporting Ukraine and aiding its reconstruction efforts in the aftermath of the war.

The Budapest Memorandum serves as a stark reminder of the importance of international law and respecting a state's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia's violations pose a serious challenge to European security, demanding a strong and unified response from the international community.

AI

AI-Generated Podcasts: A New Era of Audio Content with NotebookLM



**Podcast in English:
Russian disinformation**
<https://vpress.ovh/podcasts.htm>

In the rapidly evolving landscape of digital media, artificial intelligence continues to push boundaries, reshaping industries and redefining creative processes. One of the most groundbreaking developments is Google's NotebookLM, an advanced language model with the potential to revolutionize the podcasting world. With its ability to generate human-quality audio content, NotebookLM is paving the way for a new era of AI-driven storytelling, education, and entertainment.

The Emergence of AI-Generated Podcasts

As the podcasting industry continues to grow at an unprecedented rate, content creators and media companies are always on the lookout for innovative tools to streamline production and enhance creativity. NotebookLM, initially celebrated for its ability to generate high-quality written content, has now ventured into the realm of audio. This cutting-edge

technology is capable of producing podcasts that are nearly indistinguishable from those created by human hosts, opening up exciting possibilities for the future of digital content.

The appeal of NotebookLM-generated podcasts lies in several key features that set them apart from traditional podcasts:

Natural-Sounding Voice: NotebookLM can produce audio content with a voice that mimics the natural cadence and tone of human speech. This makes it difficult for listeners to discern that the podcast is AI-generated, offering a seamless listening experience.

Diverse Range of Topics: Whether it's breaking news, current events, or light-hearted storytelling, NotebookLM can tackle a wide array of subjects. Its versatility makes it an ideal tool for content creators looking to explore different genres without the constraints of time and labor-intensive production.

20 Everyday Abbreviations You Need to Know (and Maybe a Few You Don't)



Abbreviations are everywhere these days. From texting acronyms to technical jargon, those handy 3-letter (and sometimes longer) combos can be confusing if you're not in the know. But fear not, fellow abbreviation adventurer! This article will equip you with the knowledge to decipher 20 of the most common abbreviations you'll encounter in everyday life.

1. **LOL:** Laughing Out Loud (This one might already be a classic for many!)
2. **BRB:** Be Right Back (Perfect for a quick bathroom break during a chat)
3. **OMG:** Oh My God (Expresses surprise or strong emotion)
4. **IMHO:** In My Humble Opinion (A way to preface your opinion politely)
5. **** ASAP:** As Soon As Possible (Lights a fire under someone... nicely)
6. **FYI:** For Your Information (A heads-up for someone)
7. **ETA:** Estimated Time of Arrival (Lets you know when to expect someone)
8. **RSVP:** Please Reply (Formal request for a response to an

invitation)

9. **PDF:** Portable Document Format (A common file format for documents)
10. **JPG:** Joint Photographic Experts Group (A popular image file format)
11. **GIF:** Graphics Interchange Format (Another image format, known for animations)
12. **TIFF:** Tagged Image File Format (Used for high-quality images)
13. **WWW:** World Wide Web (The foundation of the internet we know)
14. **HTTP:** Hypertext Transfer Protocol (The language webpages use to talk)
15. **GPS:** Global Positioning System (Helps you navigate the world)
16. **ATM:** Automated Teller Machine (Your friendly neighborhood cash dispenser)
17. **DIY:** Do It Yourself (For the handy folks out there)
18. **VIP:** Very Important Person (Someone who gets special treatment)
19. **TBA:** To Be Announced (Stay tuned for more information)
20. **TBD:** To Be Determined (We're still figuring things out)

This is just a taste of the abbreviation world, but with these 20 under your belt, you'll be well on your way to deciphering the everyday lingo, from casual texts to technical documents. So, the next time you see an abbreviation that leaves you scratching your head, remember this list and keep on exploring the wonderful world of shorthand communication!

Wasa Daily

A modern newspaper with a layout with features of the press of the 1870s. Back then, newspapers had only 4-8 pages. Lots of text, but no images at all, so there's a lot to read on a few pages. Our paper is one of the very few newspapers in English serving English-speaking inhabitants in the Osthrobotnia region

The magazine contains quotations from old daily newspapers taken from the National Archives (digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi). GPT3, Gemini, Aria and Monica do some of the routine editing work, such as translation, corrector reading, and short notice writing. All texts have been checked by journalists and the editorial staff is responsible for all the content of the texts.

Wasa Daily is a daily newspaper type publication, so far it is published on Sunday mornings. But our goal is for it to come out every morning in the future.

The magazine is available online for free.

Editor-in-chief Hans Björknäs.

Readers' writings are welcome!

The magazine is locally owned and will remain so. For ever!

Editorial office: Wasa Daily, Koulukatu 37 B 7, 65100 Vaasa, tel. +358-40-5462455.

Helsinki editorial office: Wasa Daily, Toimen linja 9 B 36, 00530 Helsinki. Phone +358-40-5462455.

Email: wasadagblad@gmail.com

Our paper two years ago:



WASA DAILY - a modern newspaper with a layout from the 1870s. At that time, most newspapers had this format, corresponding to A4, and 4 pages. Lots of text, but no pictures at all, so there's a lot to read in 4 pages. The newspaper contains quotes from old daily newspapers, taken from the National Archives (digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi). GPT3 does some of the routine editorial work. Wasa Daily will continue to be published on Sunday mornings, but our aim is that it will eventually be published every day. The magazine can be read online for free, printed single issues cost 1 €. Advertising price 6 €/ millimeter, but standard ads are cheaper (25 mm high=140 €, 50 mm = 280 €, 75 mm=400 €. Repeated ads = 50% discount). Send ads to wasadagblad@gmail.com as jpg, tiff or png, the advertisements are then reduced to a column width of 46 mm. If the advertisement does not fit, we will contact you (space is limited). Editor-in-Chief: Hans Björkås. Mail: Wasa Dagblad, Skolhusgatan 37 B 7, 65100 Vasa, telephone +358-40-5462455. E-mail: wasadagblad@gmail.com

Вітаємо всіх українців у Ваасі! Сподіваємося, вам тут сподобається і навіть залишитеся після закінчення війни в Україні! A warm welcome to all Ukrainians in Vaasa! We hope you will enjoy yourself here and even stay after the war in Ukraine is over!

NEWS

XXIX Vaasa Choir Festival TODAY

There's still time for today's closing concert!

The final concert of the Vaasa Choir Festival once again brings together festival participants and main performers in the traditional way.

Take advantage of this opportunity, here is a chance to enjoy some really great choral singing, Vaasa City Hall on Sunday 21 May 2023 at 14:00

14.00-14.15 Damkören QuinnTo

14.15-14.35 Cawiar

14.35-15.00 Chamber Choir Kamppi Song

15.00-15.20 - Intermission -

15.20-15.40 Southern Ostrobothnia Male Singers Jussit

15.40-16:00 to Wasa Sångargille

Ticket €25,

Pensioners, students €20 Choir members €15

Vaasa's XXIX Choir Festival - a success!

Vaasa - a great music city. Lots of music all summer long! So this week we started with the choir festival, led by its artistic director Kristian Heberg. A few numbers and other information:

- 170 free appearances
- more than 80 choirs

Here we are:

www.vpress.ovh



Art experience of the week

The national art gallery Ateneum opened its doors in mid-April after a long renovation. In May 5 the Albert Edelfelt exhibition was opened.

Albert Edelfelt was a Finnish painter who lived from 1854 to 1905. He was a prominent figure in the Finnish art scene, and his works continue to be celebrated and studied to this day. Edelfelt's paintings reflect the beauty and simplicity of Finnish life, and his ability to capture the essence of his subjects is what sets him apart as one of Finland's greatest artists.

This famous painting, "Boys playing on the shore" was painted in 1884, and can be seen in the exhibition.

- about 1700 participants
- long nonstop concerts at the Rewell center.
- concerts in three churches, Palosaari church, Vaasa church and Orthodox church.

Next year, the Choir Festival will be organized for the thirtieth time. We'll be waiting!

VAASA

HITACHI INVESTS IN VASA

The factory burned down, but it will be rebuilt and even better and more efficient.

It's great that an international company trusts Vaasa!

WELFARE AREA and €345,000

The Ostrobothnian welfare area has budgeted €345,000 for political party support. This money is not needed in the care of patients it was decided.

True Finns and KD do not accept this money. This sum would have been enough for the salary of 10 nurses. But the welfare state chooses to give them to the political parties, which have long enjoyed party support from the state.

In Vasabladet, Asko Salminen from the True Finns says: "There is no need for a party support like this, but this money should be used for health care. Those of us who sit in the welfare area council get meeting fees. I don't understand why the parties should get extra support."

According to Vasabladet, political parties received a smaller amount of money last year, i.e. €4,000 per representative. Several parties did not find any reasonable use for the money and returned some of it. Still, the Welfare Region raised the amount of money to be donated to the parties to €6,000 this year. This money would certainly have been



Photo Supplement on pages 7-10

HOROSCOPE FOR MAY 2025

May Horoscope – The Stars Are Mumblin' (And Maybe Making Some Sense)

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)
May begins with a burst of energy! Unfortunately, you misplaced it. Try checking under the couch or in the fridge. Love is knocking – open the door, but peek through the peephole first.

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)
Happy birthday season! Celebrate with cake, presents, and maybe one extra glass of bubbly. Finances look stable – until you pass a flea market.

Gemini (May 21 – Jun 20)
You've got answers to everything, but no one's asked the questions yet. Careful with the puns – not everyone enjoys being called a "pre-coffee morning zombie."

Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22)
You're feeling emotional. That's okay – especially when you see a cute dog in the rain. Your career is moving

forward... slowly, like a snail on a sightseeing tour.

Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22)
May is your catwalk! But remember: not every sidewalk is a stage. Love is blossoming – so is the balcony weed. Choose which one to water.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sep 22)
You're planning everything to perfection. May says: "Good luck with that!" The stars suggest letting go a little – or at least trying spontaneous Taco Tuesday.

Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 22)
You're weighing your options. May might trap you in a decision loop – especially at the ice cream counter. Love is nearby, possibly hiding behind a bookshelf.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)
You attract secrets and drama. Perfect – May has plenty of both, with bonus cliffhangers. Tip: always have extra coffee at home.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)
Wanderlust is real!

Even if your biggest trip is to the grocery store. May wants you to try something new – maybe salsa dancing. Or at least hot sauce.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)
You're working hard. May whispers: "Take it easy." A picnic in the park might give you more insight than three PowerPoint decks.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)
You're ahead of your time. May is still in pajamas. Meet halfway – maybe shorts with a blazer? Innovation is coming... once you find your charging cable.

Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20)
Your head's in the clouds. May offers sunshine, rain, and sudden existential questions while waiting in line at the post office. Trust your gut – but also check the weather forecast.



HUMOUR ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

ON THE BEACH

Him: A week ago you had no idea that you would now be sitting on the beach with a man you didn't know at all.

Her: Well, I probably did.

Him: But dear little friend, you didn't know me then.

She: No, but I knew myself

WOMEN'S CLOTHING

Nothing dresses a woman better than nothing.

NERVOUS LADY

An anxious, nervous woman, accompanied by her husband, approached the station inspector at a small outlying railway station and asked: "Has the quarter-past train leaving already?"

»Yes, ten minutes ago,« was the reply.

"When does the four-and-twenty train come?"

»It takes quite a while.»

»And before dross there are no trains at all?»

"No."

»And not any passenger trains?»

"No."

»Some freight train then?»

»No, no trains at all.» "Is it absolutely safe?"

»Yes, absolutely sure!»

"Then, John, can we cross the track."

Mrs. BROWN

The pastor's wife is visiting Mrs. Brown and tells, among other things:

- I just received a letter that my son received a scholarship.

- I am really very happy. I understand your feelings so well. I used to feel exactly the same way, when our pig won first prize at the farm meeting.

MR WEST

A well-known joker once came in company into a restaurant, where he saw a familiar gentleman named Wester sitting drinking toddy. "Listen, Wester," he exclaimed, "can you tell me what is the resemblance between the sun and a toddy?"

"No", he replied.

"Well, both go down in the west," was the answer.

WHERE THE CHILDREN COME FROM

There was a group of three flamboyantly dressed very little girls, with barks and ribbons and precious toys and neighbor dolls, and near them was playing on the sand a poor little girl of about the same age, scantily clad and with a home-made primitive doll in her arms. The three fine children discussed the interesting question of where they came from, which proved a highly interesting topic for toddler speculation.

— I come from a rose, mother said, uttered one of the little living dolls.

— And me again, interjected No. 2, I must have come from a head of cabbage.

"I, yes I was picked up by a stork," said number three. Whereupon she, who had come out of a rose, scornfully and proudly turned to the poor little scantily clad girl child, and said nobly:

— And you, there, where did you come from?

— Alas, answered little Cinderella, we are so poor, so terribly poor back home, that mother and father have to make their children themselves.

Astronomic picture of the week:

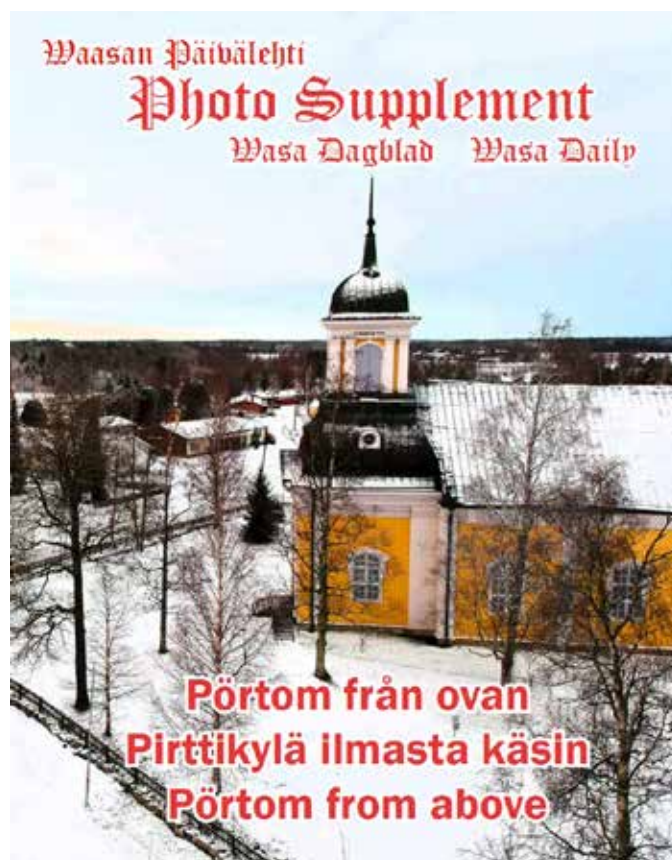


The OmegaCAM imager on ESO's VLT Survey Telescope has captured this glittering view of the stellar nursery called Sharpless 29. Many astronomical phenomena can be seen in this giant image, including cosmic dust and gas clouds that reflect, absorb, and re-emit the light of hot young stars within the nebula.

Credit: ESO

Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

Next week:



From our readers

We very much welcome submissions from our readers. Comments, stories, memories, debate, news from home. Probably this will be the most important part of this spring paper. But space is limited, so please write as short as possible! So please send posts to: wasadagblad@gmail-com

Advertise in Wasa Daily

Being among the first to advertise in this historic and hyper-modern daily may have some PR value.

Send ads to wasadagblad@gmail-com

WASA DAILY
wasadagblad@gmail-com