

Social contacts and contact tracing as modulators of the COVID-19 epidemic in Finland

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In this talk, I will characterise trends in the patterns of social contacts as learned in a series of surveys during the first and second waves of the COVID-19 epidemic in Finland in 2020. Age-specific changes in the frequency, place and mode of contacts reflect the public's response to the restriction measures as well as to the concurrent phase of the epidemic. When compared to the age-specific distribution of COVID-19 cases, surveys of social contacts help in revealing potential heterogeneity in susceptibility to infection across age groups. Apart from social distancing, as quantified by the reduction in the daily number of social contacts, isolating cases of infection and quarantining those exposed promote mitigating the epidemic. In the second part of my talk, I will describe relevant time delays in case isolation and contact tracing in Helsinki City in 2020. I will then analyse the role of contact tracing in controlling the epidemic in the capital area.