The purpose of the thesis was to take a look at what emergency departments nursing staff thought about the effectiveness of the indicator POLIHOIq in their place of work, about its role in nursing and about its applicability to use in a emergency department. The POLIHOIq indicator belongs to a system called RAFAELA that is owned by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and managed by the company Qualisan Oy. Its other subdivisions are an indicator called PAONCIL and staff resources. Instead of POLIHOIq, as a treatability classification indicator bed patient wards use an indicator called OPCq and psychiatric wards a gauge under the name of PPCq. No previous corresponding research is available; thus, this study yields the first kind of information there is on the effectiveness, meaning and applicability of the indicator POLIHOIq.

The study is a descriptive one. The research material consists of nursing staff (N=53) employed at three emergency departments (nurses, assistant nurses, practical nurses, orderlies). The study took the form of an enquiry, and the method of total sampling was used. The questionnaire comprises Likert scale questions and open questions that complement them. The response percentage was 52. The research material was analyzed by means of the statistical programme SAS Enterprise guide 9.0. Cross tabulation was employed as a statistical test. All of the Likert scale questions were also studied to find out the percentual distribution of responses between different response alternatives.

In the results, the time of use of the indicator POLIHOIq was significant regarding several questions so that the longer the respondent had used the indicator, the more positive his/her attitude to it was. According to the findings of the study, 70 % of those who had used POLIHOIq for longer than a year considered it applicable to use at a emergency department. 61 % of the same group of users think that the indicator describes a patient´s treatability either partially or fully, and 72 % were of the opinion that the indicator makes invisible care carried out by nurses visible. 75 % of the respondents deem that the introduction of the indicator has increased the amount of work. The respondents would like there to be a separate subarea for patients´ mental needs and discrete requirements for patients that do not easily respond to treatment. In addition, the respondents feel the gauge lacks a time factor that would help determine a patient´s real time of nursing care, thus making it possible to register his/her real caring needs.

The results cannot be generalized to cover emergency departments on account of the small total sample (N=108) and, likewise, the response percentage (52). Besides, in examining the role of POLIHOIq in nursing done at a emergency department the number of responses of the type ´I can´t tell´ amounted almost to 50 %, which distorts the results. However, the results are guiding. The longest period of use of POLIHOIq by the respondents has been a little more than two years, which is a short time.

Keywords: nursing classification system, patient classification, patient classification system, nursing intensity