

A Study on the Role of Social Worker in Tertiary Care Hospital in Rural Area

Prasad Kajale*, Sunil Mhaske**

Author's Affiliation: *Project coordinator; ** Professor and Head, Dept. of Paediatrics, Padmashree Dr. Vithalrao Vikhe Patil Medical College & Hospital, Near Govt. Milk Dairy, Vilad Ghat, Ahmednagar - 414111, Maharashtra, India.

Reprint request: Dr. Sunil Mhaske, Professor & Head Dept of Paediatrics; Padmashree Dr. Vithalrao Vikhe Patil Medical College & Hospital, Near Govt. Milk Dairy, Vilad Ghat, Ahmednagar - 414111, Maharashtra, India.

E-mail: sunilmhaske1970@gmail.com

Abstract

Background: Medical social work is a sub-discipline of social work, also known as Hospital social work. The social worker works with patients and their families in need of psychosocial help. Medical social workers typically work on an interdisciplinary team with professionals of other disciplines such as medicine, nursing, physical, occupational, speech and recreational therapy etc. Thus to assess the importance of social worker in hospital a study was conducted to determine the "Role of social worker in hospital". **Objectives:** To study the duties and responsibilities of a social worker in a hospital ; To study patients perception towards social worker. **Results:** The study reveals roles played by social worker in the hospital as guide, expert and therapist. When assessed the perception of patients towards social worker it was found that the patients were satisfied.

Keywords: Social worker; Duties and responsibilities; Perception.

Introduction

Social work is a profession for those with a strong desire to help improve people's lives. Social workers assist people by helping them cope with and solve issues in their everyday lives, such as family and personal problems and dealing with relationships. Some social workers help clients who face a disability, life-threatening disease, social problem, such as inadequate housing, unemployment, or substance abuse.[1]

Social workers also assist families that have serious domestic conflicts, sometimes involving child or spousal abuse. Additionally, they may conduct research, advocate for improved services, or become involved in planning or policy development. Many social workers specialize in serving a particular population or working in a specific setting.[1,2]

Medical and public health social workers provide psychosocial support to individuals,

families, or vulnerable populations so they can cope with chronic, acute, or terminal illnesses, such as Alzheimer's disease, cancer, or AIDS. They also advise family caregivers, counsel patients, and help plan for patients' needs after discharge from hospitals. They may arrange for at-home services, such as meals-on-wheels or home care. Some work on interdisciplinary teams that evaluate certain kinds of patients, such as geriatric or organ transplant patients.

Hence Medical social workers typically work on an interdisciplinary team with professionals of other disciplines such as medicine, nursing, physical, occupational, speech and recreational therapy etc. Thus to assess the importance of social worker in hospital the study was conducted to determine the "Role of social worker in hospital" by assessing the duties and responsibilities of social workers and perception of patients towards social workers.[3,4,5]

Aims

1. To study the duties and responsibilities of a social worker in a hospital.
2. To study patients perception towards social worker.
3. To identify and promote social workers of integrity, initiative and commitment in the areas of customer service, problem solving, team work and collaboration.

Methods

The study was conducted in PDVVPF's Medical College Hospital, Ahmednagar. There are about 1500 employees working day and night.

Patient health recording system here is paper based doctors and medical personals do spend lot of time for documentation.

A sample of 10 social workers working in the hospital and 60 patients with minimum hospital stay of 2 days are selected for the study based on simple random sampling techniques.

A structured questionnaire was administered.

Observations

Social worker play important role in better patient care.

Majority of social workers were female in

the age group of 20-40 years.

Patients which are assessed majority were males with age group of 30-50 years.

Conclusion

Medical social work is a sub-discipline of social work.

They work with patients and their families in need of psychosocial help.

Medical social workers work on an interdisciplinary team with medicine, surgery and nursing.

They are also guide, expert, and therapist.[6]

References

1. Higham P. Social work - Introducing professional practice. 2001; 27.
2. Chalkey AM. A text book for health worker. New Age International Publishers; vol1, 2003: 45.
3. Hancock MR. Principles of social work practice: A generic practice approach. 1997; 8.
4. Cowles, Lois A Fort. Social work in the health field: A care perspective. Haworth, New York: 2003; 3.
5. Diegielewski SF. The changing face of health care social work: Professional practice in the managed behavioral health care, 2nd ed. New York: Springer Publishers; 2004, 36-37.
6. Gould N. Mental health social work in context. 2010; 76.