

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT & MANAGEMENT

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**SCOPE OF MEDICAL SOCIAL WORK IN CURRENT CENTURY****DR. MARIYA T CHEERAN****ASST. PROFESSOR****SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
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PANANGAD****ABSTRACT**

*Medical social workers assess the psychosocial functioning of patients and families and intervene as necessary. Interventions may include connecting patients and families to necessary resources and supports in the community providing psychotherapy, supportive counseling, or grief counseling; or helping a patient to expand and strengthen their network of social supports. Social work is a professional and academic discipline committed to the pursuit of social welfare, social change and social justice. The field works towards research and practice to improve the quality of life and to the development of the potential of each individual, group and community of a society. This paper examines the scope of social work in current century.*

**KEYWORDS**

social, medical, psychotherapy, cognitive, relation, education.

**INTRODUCTION**

**M**edical social work is a sub-discipline of social work, also known as Hospital social work. Medical social workers typically work in a hospital, skilled nursing facility or hospice, have a graduate degree in the field, and work with patients and their families in need of psychosocial help. Medical social workers assess the psychosocial functioning of patients and families and intervene as necessary. Interventions may include connecting patients and families to necessary resources and supports in the community; providing psychotherapy, supportive counseling, or grief counseling; or helping a patient to expand and strengthen their network of social supports. 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.). Social work is a professional and academic discipline committed to the pursuit of social welfare, social change and social justice. The field works towards research and practice to improve the quality of life and to the development of the potential of each individual, group and community of a society. Social workers perform interventions through research, policy, community organizing, direct practice and teaching. Research is often focused on areas such as human development, social policy, public administration, program evaluation and international and community development. Social workers are organized into local, national, continental and international professional bodies. Social work, an interdisciplinary field, includes theories from economics, education, sociology, medicine, philosophy, politics, psychology, and as well as anti-oppressive and anti-racist discourse.

**HISTORY****BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

Medical social workers in Britain and Ireland were previously known as Almoners, or Hospital Almoners. In Ireland, the origins of medical social workers go back to Dr. Ella Webb, who in 1918 established a dispensary for sick children in the Adelaide Hospital in Dublin, and to Winifred Alcock who trained as an Almoner and worked with Dr. Webb in her dispensary. In 1945 the Institute of Almoners in Britain was formed, which in 1964 was renamed as the Institute of Medical Social Workers. The Institute of Medical Social Workers was one of the founder organizations of the British Association of Social Workers which was formed in 1970. In Britain, Medical Social Workers were transferred from the NHS into local authority Social Services Departments in 1974, and generally became known as Hospital Social Workers.

**UNITED STATES**

The Massachusetts General Hospital was the first American hospital to have professional social workers on site in the early 1900s. The position was created by Richard Clarke Cabot to help patients to deal with areas of their life that made treatment difficult. This was important from an epidemiological point of view, as it made it easier to control and prevent outbreaks of syphilis and tuberculosis.

**SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

Social work practice involves a systematic process and activity designed to assess client situations and help clients achieve prescribed goals and promote optimal health and well being

**Social work practice includes an understanding of:**

- Human development and behavior, human diversity, interpersonal relationships and family dynamics
- Mental disorders, stress, chemical dependency, interpersonal violence and consequences of illness or injury
- Impact of physical, social, and cultural environment
- Cognitive, affective, and behavioral manifestations of conscious and unconscious process

Social workers have greatly expanded their roles to include the field of developmental disabilities. They need to be well-informed about medical advances, federal policy, ethical issues, and the latest social work practices when working with individuals who have a developmental disability.



**SERVICES PROVIDED BY MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKERS****SUPPORTIVE COUNSELING FOR PATIENTS/FAMILIES/PARTNERS**

- Life Altering Diagnosis
- Grief Counseling
- Chemical Dependency Counseling and Resources

**PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENT FOR PLANNING AND TEAM CONSULT**

- Mental Status Examination
- Collaboration with MD's; Geriatric/Oncology/Nephrology Specialists, case managers, and other team members

**LONG AND SHORT TERM CARE PLANNING**

- Assessment of Home and Support System
- Anticipation of Future Care and Support Needs
- Board and Care/SNF/ Residential Community Consult
- Residential and Home Hospice Options
- Home Health Options

**ROLE OF THE MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKER**

Medical social workers are employed in hospitals, clinics and other medical settings.

1. A medical social worker is part of an interdisciplinary treatment team, which can include doctors, nurses, clergy, physical therapists and other health specialists. The social worker helps the patient to understand her course of treatment guides the patient through the process and engages in discharge planning and patient advocacy. The social worker also gives emotional support and counseling to patients and their families.
2. Medical social workers assist patients with a variety of different health-related issues. For instance, in a hospice setting the social worker might help a terminally ill patient make meaning out of her life and prepare for death, while a social worker in an outpatient clinic could help a person in remission from cancer find a local support group.
3. Social workers are trained to understand how a person interacts with the environment; in a medical setting, this perspective can be invaluable. Medical social workers will advocate for clients rights specifically where religious, cultural and racial differences are concerned.

**CONCLUSION**

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.

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