

The Role of Social Work in Health Care System

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Abstract

Health policy makers in macro level in their plans can pay attention to health infrastructure and notify more to health care than treatment, and with increasing number of patients in the community using social workers in finding causes of illness in the population. Present research focus on role of social work in the health field with library research and documents. The findings suggest that access to health care from one country to another, from one group to another, from one person to another is depending on the social, economic, cultural and health policies. In this field, the social workers are able to contribute to the understanding of different cultures and environments. The correct and efficient support systems, adequate facilities and equipment provide high quality medical services and technology will be completed. On the other hand, the role of social work in comparison with other professions in health care system and social services are so different. Acceptance the clients and professional attitudes are the prominent characteristics of social workers that cause them to assess the clients in three situations: 1- Needs assessment 2- The condition of the client 3- The interaction between person and community.

Keywords: Social Work, Health care system, Holistic, Need, Patient

1. Introduction

Health policy-makers can plan their health infrastructure in macro level and pay more attention to health care than treatment. Due to the increasing number of patients in the community, using social workers can find the roots of illnesses and social problems in team working. This means that social workers use their unique techniques including community based work, social objectives and the implementation of health programs based on community play its role to the best.

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Medical professionals tend to medical model of health care, it means the medical history, test results, scrutiny the symptoms, treatment the ill person and eventually led to clinical measures and efficiency will be successful. This approach has been criticized and many believed that, this approach provide a paternalistic relationship between doctor and patient, it means that relative success from the perspective of a patient and the providers of treatment could be very different.

With this approach World Association of Social Work for Social Workers has expressed some standard roles in order to raise health and medical services and rectify the social needs for public(Samadi Rad, 2012).

Currently social workers across the continuum of treatment services (outpatient, acute, chronic, crisis intervention, counseling, advocacy and case management) will play their role. Participation in natural disasters, global and national challenges in line with the privatization of health-care and stress inflicted on patients and their families are the major role that social workers can be involved in it (NASW, 2005). Social worker in a medical team helps to solve social problems in individual patients and their families, and the interaction between the patient and the family is the main role of social workers in health care for patients in order to obtain their health.

Therefore the health of human beings needs to meet the growing demands and social workers need to balance life roles. Advances in medical science have provided hope and improved quality of life for many people, although this advancement, it has created ethical dilemmas for individuals and families.

2. Problem Statement

Health care program, provide prevention services, treatment and enhancement of it are the important activities of health care system, However, when resources, funds and personnel can't meet the health care needs of patients, in this case between the health care system and patient dissatisfaction a direct link is created. In developed countries spend an average of 9% of GDP on medical care. In 2008 in America the number is 16%, In France 11%, In Switzerland 10.7%, however in Iran it's 5.6 %(Wikipedia, 2008).

With advances in technology it causes pollution of the environment, the gap between humans with each other, forced to endure the stress caused by urban traffic, and turning to prepared foods (fast food) makes deprivation of basic vitamins and the chemical substance and preservatives in most food increase the number of patients.

Iran received more than eight million patients annually in the hospitals. However, the hospitals do not have the ability to meet all the needs of patients. There are a total of 120,000 beds in which more than 80% of them are occupied, while the universal standard for occupation of beds is 75 percent. By analyzing the status of practitioners in the field of social work at the Ministry of Health from the 552 employees as social workers only 32 person has social work degree (psycho-social therapy) and 100 person has social service degree (providing social services). That means only 5 percent of practitioners in the field of social work at the Ministry of Health graduated in social work and 20% of them graduated in social services and 95 percent of them have Bachelor or Diploma and the small number of social workers working in this area should be noticed(website of Iran Health Ministry, 2010).

Macro planning policy based on a balance between patient, needs of community and health system with using social work team seems to be required.

3. Research Necessity

The disease weakens tilting the balance of physical, psychological, social, economic and human,

While increasing illness (both mental and physical aspects), perhaps in the future we will observe the crisis in health care system. Also Iran among the other countries has a high incidence of natural disasters, so the consequences of these disasters include outbreaks of certain diseases and the burden of the crisis on the social, cultural and family in the country. Therefore, social work intervention is necessary and it can play an effective role in these fields.

4. Research Purposes

The purpose of this study includes:

1. Identify the essential role of social work in health care system.
2. How social workers in health care system can improve the quality and performance of this system?
3. What are the strategies and policies for overcoming the problems in social work in healthcare system?

5. Professional Social Work

Social work as a profession commonly is known in England about 110 years ago and is the benefactor and well-organized group of women to take shape. The ladies and gentlemen who are mainly women, who had excelled in their community, seeing the chaos and confusion of many of its citizens, mostly due to poverty, disease and aging in a busy hospital or home remedy poor were admitted to the idea fell and the good of the group and provide assistance to people who need it. Gradually, it became coherent organizational aspects of behavior and professional infrastructure established that nowadays a large and complex bureaucratic organization and must find any modern democratic society is considered (Samadi Rad, 2008). In 2007 the International Association of Social Workers has accepted the following definition of social work:

"Professional social work, social change, problem solving in human relationships, empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being and promotes development. Using theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment is.

Human rights and social justice are the principles and foundations of Social Work » (IFSW, 2000, cited in Wilson, Ruch, Lymbery & Cooper, 2008: 49). Social work has different aspects and includes a sophisticated analysis of the individual and the environment in human behavior (Hutchison, 2008). The following is an attempt to define the meaning and purpose of their integration in social work:

"Social work is trying to get through to those who do not have the right to earn a living and help to achieve the highest degree of autonomy» (Crouch, 1979).

Thus the material presented can be concluded that social work is the professional service or services or special activity that is based on specific knowledge and skills, the purpose of the assistance to individuals, groups or society in order to deal more effectively with the problems they are facing and thus to achieve personal independence and fulfillment of personal or social.

6. History of Social Work in Health Care System

Social workers from the twentieth century have been involved in health care system such as providing services for poor people, worked with the elderly and patients with tuberculosis. In 1977, the World Association of Social Work published standards for the provision of health care services in hospitals and in 1980, the standards for social workers in health centers developed and it replaced hospital standards. Between 1981 and 1982, the National Association of Social Work Board's new developed standards approved and added to the previous standard of care.

These standards include the activities of social workers in the field of kidney patient, disability, treatment and health care and followed by social workers into the health care system and the public and private sectors were engaged. More activities of social workers concentrate on transferring the patient or refer him or her to home and in some cases solve the financial problems.

In the capital of Iran, Tehran, in 1960 at Roozbeh Hospital, social work began to work, after a decade in office the of Health and Welfare and then in the Ministry of Health, Social Work Department was established.

7. Social Workers Standards in Health Care System

Journal of the National Association of Social Work in Health Care expressed standards for social workers considered that some of them are:

1. Ethics and Values
2. Health inequalities
3. Cultural Competence
4. Privacy professionals
5. Knowledge

6. Assessment
7. Intervention and Treatment
8. Leadership in social work
9. File Management
10. Crisis Intervention
11. Empowerment

Most of these standards, the role of social work in the health care system has been investigated. Therefore, according to this definition, one-dimensional view of the patient and the patient is almost obsolete.

8. Iranian Constitution and the Role of Social Work in Health Care System

In Iran, the Ministry of Health is defined by the constitution and therefore it's responsible for health care tasks and social workers are also one part of this ministry.

In the constitution the Ministry of Health has been defined:

For optimal use and coordination of medical facilities and extended to provide health care, education and medical research the 29th principle express: "The entitlement to social security and retirement, unemployment, old age, disability, orphans, accidents and the need for health services, medical care, insurance and ... are the public rights of citizens and it's the government duty to provide these services with public finance and profits from the participation of local people to support every citizen's needs.

For each part of the duties of the ministry of health policy and action plan has been approved by the Council. Among the tasks formulated and approved for social work as well as a few tips that are mentioned briefly (Administrative Affairs and Employment, 1995)

1. Planning in order to identify issues and constraints created by the families of patients and how to deal with it.
2. Participate in medical teams and provide information on issues and problems that can be effective in making decisions
3. Coordinated in collaboration with the medical team in order to improve the patient and the medical team cooperation with social worker.

4. Emphasis on group work with patients who are hospitalized for long time.
5. Support after discharge.
6. Social services at home (Home care)
7. Professional practice of social workers (social workers working with cancer patients , AIDS patients , etc.).
8. Follow Legal Affairs patients.
9. Investigate and solve the health problems of patients admitted to care centers.
10. Get introduced to guide patients admitted for medical and paramedical clinics and other medical institutions.
11. Collect and evaluate cost-free discount applied to the unit's social worker and the amount of discount centers ministry, as well as for follow-up funding from the Ministry of Health and assign it to the centers.
12. Cooperation in the form of in-service training courses to improve the quality of social work.
13. Gathering statistics and information on the activities of social workers and medical centers to examine and evaluate the activities and reflection related authorities.
14. Cooperation in the field of practical training (internship) for students of social work.
15. Cooperation and provide social services or send social workers to help victims of natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters.

The objectives in the field of health care in general is the specific mode and influenced policy, attitudes, ideologies, values and scholars in this field. But the concept of social work intervention aims to improve the social functioning of the health care so the goals and roles of social work will become clearer below:

1. Evaluation of stress on psychological, social, emotional and physical environment for patients and their families may encounter and provide assistance to them directly.
2. Play the role of counselor, advocate, liaison, mediation and helping patients to make optimal use of health care programs.
3. Providing health care programs, including prevention programs and improving the quality of life in a way that is applicable and accessible to all patients and members of the community.
4. Human and social support programs for the benefit of needy patients.

5. Create interaction and communication between health care personnel and patients treated with the positive cooperation between them is obtained.
6. Participation and correct analysis of health policy and planning (member of making macro policy committee).
7. Leadership programs in the areas of participation and patient education.
8. Management and evaluation of how to provide health services to the poor through research.
9. Changing health care services from service center to need center and the combination of the two.
10. Working with the mentally ill, frail and their families and assess their needs.
11. Identify the main causes of mental illnesses and other diseases with providing community based rehabilitation.

9. Conclusion

According to social and collectivist perspective, social work seeks cooperation and mutual support in the community. But most deprived people don't have the power over their own lives. Unfortunately, nowadays most of the time, life of the patients has been tied with income levels. While we have the best equipped public and governmental hospitals, the culture of sending patients to private facilities and practices have been expanded.

Therefore people who can't go to private centers, are faced with two options:
1- They can choose private treatment and hospitals with lots of debt collection
2- Forcibly with lots of stress and emotional turmoil the patients should go to public part. In both setting anxiety and emotional stress is for low-income patient.

Nowadays Social workers in order to support social functioning of individuals, families and communities apply a holistic and rational approach instead of considering one-dimensional approach to human. In this approach the other dimensions of human such as social, cultural, environmental, physical, emotional, value and dignity of human beings is also scrutinize. Therefore the important role of social workers in the field of health is very important because the social workers are the fundamental performers in health care system.

The role of social work in comparison with other professions in health care system and social services are so different. Acceptance the clients and professional attitudes are the prominent characteristics of social workers that cause them to assess the clients in three situations: 1- Needs assessment 2- The condition of the client and 3- The interaction between person and community. While other professions concentrate on certain aspects of a person's life such as health needs, education, income or housing. Important role of social workers in health care is when the three sectors of society, patient and health care system are integrated so it will help them to avoid facing the problems in one dimension.

10. Suggestions

According to the material presented can be used to improve the quality of services to patients, families and communities aimed at following suggestions are offered:

1. The social workers in the health care system can play the role of researcher for finding the detection of diseases and patient needs.
2. Social workers in health care system can make major decisions regarding the type of services and enhance patient satisfaction.
3. In order to avoid increasing the level of diseases in the community, social workers should improve the structures and institutions of society, scientific planning and management should be considered.
4. For preventing the diseases in society, we will require the cooperation of all agencies and governmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).
5. Increasing funds share of gross domestic income to health care system.
6. Opening the Social Work Department in health care system and support all the hospitals with professional social workers.
7. Changing the physician-centered approach to patient-centered approach in health care system.

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