

MEDICAL SOCIAL WORK IN THE 'CENTRO NACIONAL DE PARAPLEJICOS', TOLEDO, SPAIN

By J. MENDOZA-SARMIENTO, M.D., *and Social Workers:* P. DIAGO, M. L. ENRIQUEZ, M. L. HUERTAS, M. L. OCHOA and A. URTIAGA

THE Centre was inaugurated in September 1974. In December of that year the first social welfare workers joined the hospital staff and began to work with the patients. At present, the Medical Social Service Section has a full-time staff of five social workers.

As of 30 April 1975, the number of cases which were handled by the Medical Social Section was 141.

Each social worker is in charge of one particular ward; his activities being carried out in close relation with doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

The social worker has first contact with the patient when the patient is admitted to the ward. In most cases, during the first interview with the patient, the social worker can determine whether or not the patient has social problems. If it is found that a patient does have social problems, a social history is opened. His specific problems are noted as well as steps to be taken in order to resolve his problems. Close contact is kept with the patient and the evolution of his case is recorded in his social history. When it is found that a patient does not have any particular social problem a file card is completed with routine information about the patient. If in the course of later visits to the wards it is found that such a patient has begun to show social problems, he will be recommended to the Medical Social Section.

Each social worker keeps a daily record of his work and all the social workers have a general meeting once a week in order to coordinate their work. They also meet weekly with the rehabilitation team with the object of studying each patient's case from all points of view. They also have frequent conferences with the 'Technical Sub-director', who is in charge of resolving the problems of patient's professional training and re-entrance into society.

A statistical study is made every month of the work done. This study describes the type of problems encountered, management, interviews held.

As an illustrative example of the first few months of work done by the Medical Social Service Section, statistical data corresponding to data gathered from 141 patients from December 1974 until April 1975 will be demonstrated.

In Figure 1, the distribution of patients by sex can be seen. In Figure 2 the distribution of patients by age. In Figure 3 the proportion of paraplegics to tetraplegics.

Table I demonstrates the principal social problems encountered by order of frequency. Table II shows some results and its relation with the centre's own resources.

With respect to practical results, the probabilities of resolving deep social problems are limited and they are in direct relation to the resources which the Centre has to offer. Once the Centre possesses its own resources such as schools, the majority of problems of this type can be solved. The Centre does not yet

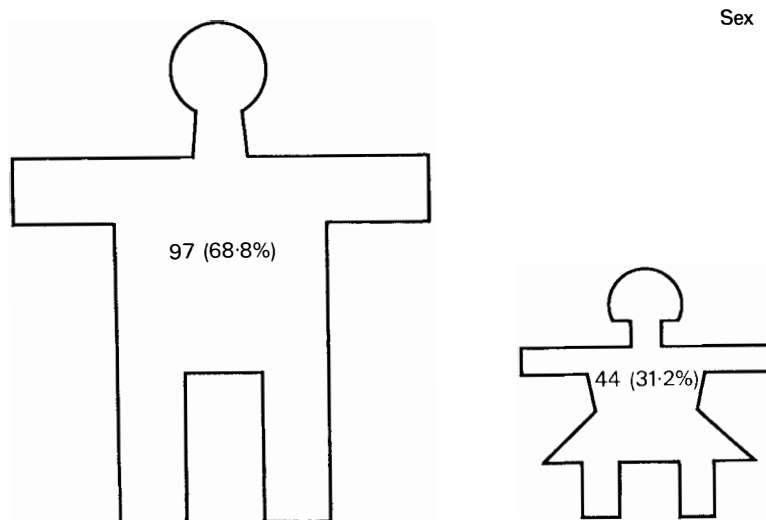


FIG. 1

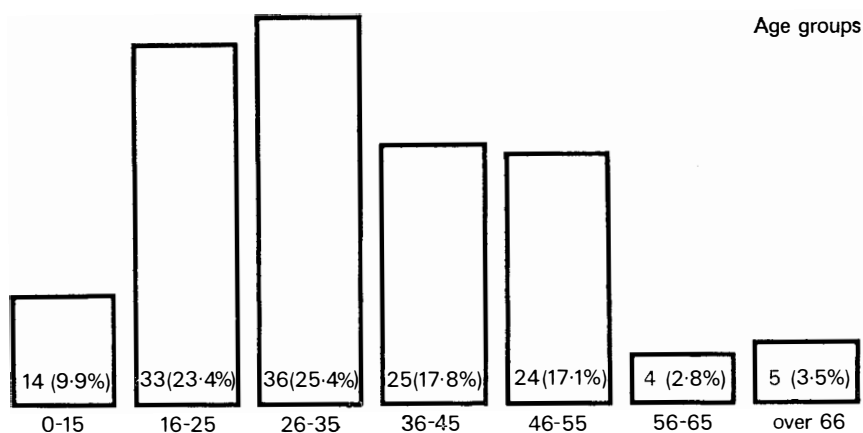


FIG. 2

have specific resources at its disposal, such as sheltered workshops and schools for professional training, as construction has not yet commenced.

In any case the Medical Social Service Section at the Centre gives its major attention and interest to these problems and tries to solve them by maintaining constant contact with all official organisations that lend help to the disabled.

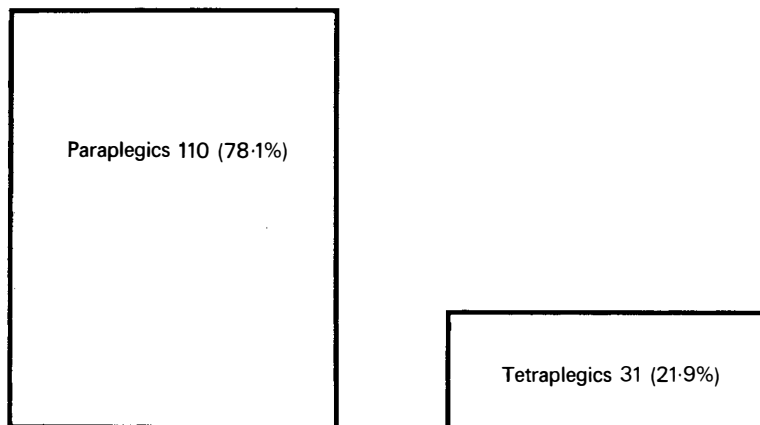


FIG. 3

TABLE I

Main social problems

Patients, 141—Social Problems, 166

Housing	59 cases	(41.8% of the total 141 patients)
Job	32 cases	(22.6% of the total 141 patients)
Family	29 cases	(20.5% of the total 141 patients)
Pension	26 cases	(18.4% of the total 141 patients)
Hostel	13 cases	(9.2% of the total 141 patients)
School	7 cases	(4.9% of the total 141 patients)

TABLE II

Results

School problems	7	Solved 6 (School functioning at the centre)
Job problems	32	Solved 6 (Workshops not yet functioning)

SUMMARY

The Medical Social Service in the 'Centro Nacional de Rehabilitación de Paraplégicos' of Toledo is briefly explained. Until 30 April 1975, 141 patients were treated in this hospital and the pertinent statistics are shown. The main social problems were housing, pension and job. The Medical Social Service makes use of all its resources to solve these problems.