

# The role of medical records and medical secretary in supporting Nurses and Psychologists in Treating Chronic Mental Health Disorders

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Mental health illnesses including depression, schizophrenia, bipolar diseases and anxiety disorder are complex mental health conditions that continue to place a burden on health care systems globally. Not only do these conditions influence the patient's psychological state, but they also ruin his/her social and professional life and, to an extent, physical health. It is therefore pertinent to know that patients with chronic mental disorders need an integrated, comprehensive, and holistic intervention and care from different specialists and allied professionals.

**Aim of work:** To explore the crucial role that medical records and medical secretaries play in supporting nurses and psychologists in the treatment of chronic mental health disorders.

**Methods:** We conducted a comprehensive search in the MEDLINE database's electronic literature using the following search terms: Role, medical records, medical secretary, supporting, Nurses, Psychologists, Treatment, Chronic, Mental Health Disorders. The search was restricted to publications from 2016 to 2024 in order to locate relevant content. We performed a search on Google Scholar to locate and examine academic papers that pertain to my subject matter. The selection of articles was impacted by certain criteria for inclusion.

**Results:** The publications analyzed in this study encompassed from 2016 to 2024. The study was structured into various sections with specific headings in the discussion section.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, medical records, and medical secretaries are very crucial when it comes to assisting nurses and psychologists in managing and treating patients with chronic mental illnesses. By providing detailed documentation, acting as a bridge between providers and patient, and arranging proper care coordination for patients, these roles enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of care for those with complex mental health conditions. The efficient usage of electronic health records and improved collaboration with other healthcare providers can facilitate the treatment of patients with chronic mental health disorders and

improve their overall quality of life. However, the issues revolving around EHR integration, excessive administrative burdens, and interprofessional working will prove to be vital in leveraging the instruments and positions in mental health contexts.

**Keywords:** *Role, medical records, medical secretary, supporting, Nurses, Psychologists, Treatment, Chronic, Mental Health Disorders*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Depression, schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder and anxiety disorders are some of the long term mental illnesses that continually hamper several healthcare systems globally (Carta et al., 2017). Not only does the presence of these conditions have significance effects on a patient's psychological state, but it also will be apparent that it influences their Social/Occupational and Physical health. Depression and other chronic mental illnesses cannot be managed purely by formulating a plan, or only through the help of a doctor (Colizzi et al., 2020). This working team includes registered nurses, clinical psychologists, and other parts of the administrative personnel, which is the medical secretary on inpatient wards and clinics. Based on Alkahtani et al., one of the essential elements that need to be considered when it comes to helping HC decision-makers address chronic mental disorders includes medical records as well as administrative tasks that are incumbent on the institution.

However, can be assigned as medical record, now, it stays as the key element of modern medical practice as it contains information about patient's past and present illnesses, diagnosis, treatments, evolution, and results. To the nurses and psychologists that manage patients with chronic mental health illnesses, medical records are more than file cabinets that contain important data about patients, but they are tools for issuing better patient care and interprofessional relationship which were well expounded by Kariotis et al. (2022). These records guarantee that the doctors who are treating the patient have an updated approach for the detailed record on the patient including psychiatric evaluation, prescribed drugs, therapy and any other medical conditions that may be present in the patient. Moreover, for similar treatment, the records offer a complete medical history since it assists the clinician inpatient management, assess results of therapies administered, and determine any complications or adverse effects that the patient may experience as treatment is underway (Evans, 2016).

The main importance of nurses is to be the direct caregivers delivering ongoing treatment and assessment to patients with persistent mental ailments. They are also responsible with issues to do with administration of medication, implementation of therapeutic efforts, offering morale support, as well as assessing patients' response to treatment. Nurses are usually involved in primary patient contact, thus, they need clear and successive medical data for effective patient care (Costa et al., 2021). For instance, a nurse requires to check on the patient's history on medications in order to avoid contradiction between current and past treatments or to check on possible side effects. Likewise, nurses can notice any alterations in the status of a particular patient and share these issues with psychologists or other professionals, so that they are addressed (Kwame & Petrucka, 2021).

Psychologists in a similar manner, are concerned with patient's physical and emotional state whilst suffering from illnesses associated with chronic mental health disorders (Bohlmeijer & Westerhof, 2020). Psychologists explain to the patients the nature of the diseases; how they can deal with them; and other forms of treatment through psychotherapy and other related therapies. Completeness and availability of medical records are crucial for a psychologist to have a glimpse at a patient's background as well as to monitor the efficiency of the applied methods or to find

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out, whether there are any factors that may facilitate the further treatment process. For instance, medical records may be used by psychologists as a source of information on the patient's past history of mental illnesses, medications and prior psychological evaluations which are very helpful in coming up with an appropriate treatment plan (Shea, 2016).

As valuable as nurses and other care givers are the medical secretaries who take care of the administrative side of the healthcare practice. The medical secretaries have the role of organizing the appointments of the patients, and to act as middlemen in its communication between other healthcare providers, managing the records of the patients and to make sure all forms need to be filled and properly archived. With regards to long-term mental health care, medical secretaries contribute to improving clients' access to the care they need, so that nurses and psychologists can spend more time with the patients. Furthermore, they adhere to legal and ethical requirements such as data sovereignty especially because working with mental health requires dealing with personal data, hence they must respect the Data Protection Act (Alqahtani et al., 2022).

### **AIM OF WORK**

This review will outline the significant function of a medical record and a medical secretary in assisting nurses and Psychologists in treating the patient with chronic mental disorders. The role of timely and proper management of medical records in the healthcare systems will be reviewed, and how it contributes to the delivery of high-quality patients' care, effective provision of care through inter-professional relations, and increased efficiency of administrative work. Besides, it will outline the necessity of medical secretaries as the main column of an effective organizational process in the context of the needed mental health treatment and the different integration of the administrative and clinical services. Finally, this discussion will also highlight the role of multidisciplinary team to manage chronic mental health disorders as par to all involves in the treatment team, from nurses, clinical psychologists to medical secretaries.

### **METHODS**

A thorough search was carried out on well-known scientific platforms like Google Scholar and Pubmed, utilizing targeted keywords such as Role, medical records, medical secretary, supporting, Nurses, Psychologists, Treatment, Chronic, and Mental Health Disorders. The goal was to collect all pertinent research papers. Articles were chosen according to certain criteria. Upon conducting a comprehensive analysis of the abstracts and notable titles of each publication, we eliminated case reports, duplicate articles, and publications without full information. The reviews included in this research were published from 2016 to 2024.

### **RESULTS**

The current investigation concentrated on the crucial role that medical records and medical secretaries play in supporting nurses and psychologists in the treatment of chronic mental health disorders between 2016 and 2024. As a result, the review was published under many headlines in the discussion area, including: The Role of Medical Records in Chronic Mental Health Care, Electronic Health Records (EHR) and Mental Health Care, The Role of Medical Secretaries in Supporting Nurses and Psychologists, Enhancing Patient Outcomes Through Collaboration, Challenges and Opportunities in Improving Coordination of Care

## **DISCUSSION**

The long-term illnesses in question, and, in particular, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, and OCD, pose diagnostic and management difficulties. These illnesses usually take time to heal, and they entail services from other health care practitioners in other fields (Lake & Turner, 2017). Of all these professions, the nurses and psychologists have a very central role in these disorders; they have to ensure that the patients get the right care as they deal with the symptoms in order to have a good quality life. Indeed, in this interprofessional focus, the profile of medical records and medical secretaries cannot be overemphasized. Charting is the foundation for patient care since it entails essential facts about client's past medical history, care given and the outcomes observed from implemented measures. These medical secretaries also manage and coordinate the flow of these details between the medical team and the patients (Rosenbaum et al., 2021).

### **The Role of Medical Records in Chronic Mental Health Care**

It is worth knowing that medical records are an important element of the medical practice since they help document all the issues relative to a given patient and avail this information to the healthcare practitioner where and when needed. This means that it is a very important component of the practice. This is because medical records are central in the documentation of all issues related to a patient and make this information available to the healthcare practitioner where and when the same is required. Because the periods of treatment in mental health care can be relatively long, and the processes are comprehensive, the function of the medical record increases even more. They act as primary sources of information for the nurses, psychologist, psychiatrist and any other health care givers as they provide information on the patient's history, current complaints, and the received treatments (Riahi et al., 2017).

Another advantage in using medical records in the treatment of long-term mental illnesses is that they give a history of the patient's illness. Many chronic mental illnesses demand constant observation since their signs may vary minute by minute or hour by hour as the patient reacts to various treatments. Originality: Medical records help the caregivers to keep track of these alterations providing a record if the patient improvement that can prompt the necessary action. For instance, a nurse realized a patient had become more depressed; after checking records, one realized whether the patient had been changed on their medication or not, or if other aspects, including stress, or other diseases could have affected the patient (Roberge et al., 2016).

In addition, medical records play a role of continuity of care. Virtually all patients with chronic psychiatric disorders receive care from more than one provider over time, and it is critical that each provider have complete and timely information. Through documentation, different team members involved in the care process of the patient, can easily communicate or interchange their progress. In situations where the patient is transferred by referral from one care setting to another say from an inpatient care unit to an outpatient care unit, transfer of records make it possible for the receiving caregivers to have all the necessary information to give the further care (Loranger, & Fleury, 2020).

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## **Electronic Health Records (EHR) and Mental Health Care**

Technological advancement calls for the introduction of Electronic Health Records (EHRs) in health care settings. It is a digital system that has plenty of advantages over the traditional paper record, such as easy access and security as well as streamlined communication. EHRs can have a tremendous impact in mental health care on improving the quality of care for patients with chronic mental health disorders (Kariotis et al., 2022).

Amongst the advantages with EHR systems is the fact that they may be accessed simultaneously by multiple health care professionals. This becomes important in a multiprofessional team where nurses, psychologists, and so on need to have access to the same information. For example, the nurse may document the patient's progress during a check-up event, while at the same time the psychologist refers to this progress report before conducting their therapy. With this real-time sharing of information, duplication of effort is avoided, errors are reduced, and the entire health care team works on the same page regarding the patient's condition (Vos et al., 2020).

Any disruption between medicines ordered by healthcare providers and their actual dosage could be reported by an electronic health record system; or it can notify healthcare personnel regarding upcoming appointments, refilling medicines, or follow-up care. This feature becomes even most critical in chronic mental health care, where it may cause relapses or aggravation of symptoms as a result of non-adherence to medications or missing appointments (Martins et al., 2024).

EHR systems provide a method of standardizing documentation, reducing the possibility of miscommunication between such documents and the people within the team. Also, standardized templates and documents would guarantee that such life-saving sections, for example, symptoms, medications, and treatment plans, are conserved through EHRs. Thus, the quality of care increases because all relevant cases are able to retrieve relevant patient background information quickly rather than searching and going through incomplete and unorganized cases (Hobensack et al., 2022).

## **The Role of Medical Secretaries in Supporting Nurses and Psychologists**

While medical records form the core basis of patient information, medical secretaries take the essential role in managing the logistical aspects of a patient's care. They are the communication channels between the health care team and the patients in the organization and management of appointments, all forms of communication, and documentation. Medical secretaries smoothen the welfare of the healthcare process by quick access to care for patients and its information to the healthcare team (Shea, 2016).

An important responsibility of a medical secretary within mental health care is the managing and attending of appointments of patients. Patients with chronic mental health problems typically require frequent follow-ups, which can be for medication, therapy sessions, or assessments. A medical secretary's role in booking appointments for these types of visits minimize missed visits which can potentially aggravate symptoms. Urgent appointments or rescheduling appointments

due to the patient's condition that requires immediate medical attention might also be assisted by the medical secretary (Daba et al., 2024).

At the same time, the medical secretaries are communicating between different medical professionals. For instance, if a psychologist or a nurse would like to speak to another member of the healthcare team, the medical secretary makes sure that the messages get relayed on time to that person. They help organize multidisciplinary meetings, wherein different sets of people discuss the cases of the patients and make decisions regarding their treatment. This is especially vital for the mental health setting, as justifying the collaboration among providers is due to the completeness of the treatment plan for the patient (Zakri et al., 2024).

They will however ensure that patient records are updated, organized, and available when needed by healthcare providers. That includes making sure that the documents are accurate, complete, and filed properly in line with the paper and electronic systems. This, therefore, enhances a smooth flow of information across the healthcare team for coordination of care and mitigation of error (Knudsen, 2024)..

### **Enhancing Patient Outcomes Through Collaboration**

The collaboration between medical records, medical secretaries, nurses, and psychologists is essential for enhancing patient outcomes in the treatment of chronic mental health disorders (Delaney et al., 2018). Nurses and psychologists rely heavily on the support provided by medical records and medical secretaries to ensure that patients receive timely and effective care. By ensuring that patient information is accurately documented, easily accessible, and well-coordinated, these roles contribute significantly to the overall quality of care (World Health Organization, 2018).

For instance, nurses play a critical role in monitoring patients, administering medications, and providing education. However, their ability to provide high-quality care is enhanced when they have access to complete and up-to-date medical records. These records allow them to track a patient's progress, identify any issues, and ensure that interventions are tailored to the individual needs of the patient. With the help of medical secretaries in scheduling appointments and organizing care plans, nurses can focus on their clinical responsibilities, confident that the administrative aspects of care are being managed effectively (Jinxiang, 2023).

Even psychologists could have the benefit of medical records and medical secretaries for their advancement. The chronic mental health disorder usually serves as one requiring treatment over long periods, and thereby a psychologist has to be equipped with a full record of the patient's medical history and responses to former interventions to help keep track of his or her progress in psychotherapy and improvise treatment plans if necessary. It is also essential that a medical secretary serve as an intermediary for their psychologists with other healthcare providers&mdash;in this way, one ensures that a treatment approach is collaborative and comprehensive (Shea, 2016).

### **Challenges and Opportunities in Improving Coordination of Care**

There are benefits for both the medical records and medical secretaries in relation to the support given to nurses and psychologists. Still, many things must be done to make the services of the medical records and medical secretaries more effective in mental health settings. One of the challenges faced in mental health settings is the need for adequate integration of electronic health record systems between different health facilities. Inconsistent or incompatible EHR systems can hinder the smooth exchange of information between providers, potentially leading to delays in care or misunderstandings regarding patient histories (Ribeiro & Cavalcanti, 2020).

Moreover, medical secretaries usually shoulder lots of administrative burdens in busy healthcare settings, which can sometimes lead them to suffer from burnout or turn-to-stress, which again will affect their managing capabilities. Training, support, and staffing medical secretaries must be adequate to ensure that they can still continue with their critical role in mental healthcare (Daba et al., 2024).

Finally, most important is improving collaboration between the various members of the healthcare team. Nurses, psychologists, medical records, and medical secretaries must work together if patients with chronic mental health disorders are to receive the best possible care. This can be done by encouraging open communication, regular meetings, and shared goals (Shea, 2016).

### **CONCLUSION**

Indeed, medical records along with the medical secretaries are indispensable valuable resources to nurses and psychologists in the treatment of chronic mental health disorders. It makes the process of care much simpler and efficient as well as ensures appropriate documentation, easy retrieval, and management of patient information. These clear indications provide a well-rounded view of the past history, progress, and reaction of an individual towards different medical interventions, thus making it based on clear and timely care offered by healthcare providers. By embracing Electronic Health Records (EHRs), health professionals will record real-time data, collaborate with greater efficiency, and enhance the overall efficiency in which care is provided.

The medical secretary further eases this process by dealing with logistics between the different professionals and patients concerning appointments, communication, and even the actual documentation for patient encounters on most occasions. Such logistics in the patient care model basically segregate all patients during times of interaction with nurses or psychologists and ensure that they fully devote time to their core clinical responsibilities, thus markedly improving treatment outcomes in the integrative models of care. Integrated approach, medical record, and support from medical secretaries also greatly contribute to keeping continuous care, error-free systems, and improved patient outcomes in the treatment of chronic mental health disorders.

But there are barriers like kinks in the electronic health records (EHR), admin load, and issues in the cross professional working environment that need persistently to be solved: overcoming the barriers above would further optimize medical-records and medical-secretary roles in mental health, in professional care, towards more efficient and patient-centered care. Possibly, it will also improve seamless communication, promote better integration within providers, and offer health supports to medical secretaries, finally leading to improving in quality-of-care patient conditions who frequently live with chronic mind health conditions. Ultimately, all these and roles will improve the effectiveness of treatment, the quality of patient life.

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