

THE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH PARENTS AND/OR PATIENTS: VOLUNTARY SUPPORT GROUPS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH CRANIOFACIAL ANOMALIES

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INTRODUCTION: Coordinators are parents and/or adult patients that volunteer to represent the Hospital at their city/region of origin. Coordinators are considered multiplying agents as they share their knowledge and experiences throughout the long treatment process. They are habilitated and /followed by Community Projects Social Workers. The objective of this study is to characterize these coordinators, their actions and describe the social practice developed for their empowerment. **METHODOLOGY:** it was a documental research on records of 415 patients/coordinators for information regarding the social-economical-SES, geographical data and Social Worker's follow up register in the city file. **RESULTS:** Findings indicated the following profile for 415 coordinators studied: 85% are parents of patients; 4,2% of Low Inferior SES; 55,3% of Low Superior SES; 33,1% of Middle Inferior-SES; 6,4% of Middle-SES; and 1,0% of Middle Superior SES; 5,9% are from the North region of the country; 3,6% from the Northeast; 9,7% from Midwest; 16,7% from South; and 64,1% from Southeast. These 415 coordinators potentially serve a 16.397 patients (31,9% of the total enrolled) and their role is to support patients while at their communities, to make known the hospital and its services, to gather local resources and to help assure patients' rights supported/monitored by a social worker's practice addressed to empower them through, training, supervision, evaluation. **CONCLUSION:** this study revealed that their profile reflect the universe of all enrolled patients and their actions assure the representation of the Hospital and of a large number of patients at their hometowns/regions and the social worker's practice must be review constantly in order to keep its empowerment characteristics.