

Social Work in Integrated Primary Care: A Systematic Review

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Background and Significance

- Population health and the impact of the social determinants of health are major focus of health care system redesign
- Increase in the deployment of integrated care teams to treat patients' "whole health"
- Elements of healthcare system redesign align with social work practice and values
 - ✓ Addressing the social determinants of health
 - ✓ Coordinating care
 - ✓ Integrating complex ancillary services (e.g., housing, food security)
 - ✓ Screening both preventive and treatment services for behavioral health problems

What is Integrated Healthcare?

- No one agreed upon definition or framework
- Integration often considered to occur on a continuum
- Our study: *Interprofessional collaboration and coordination of services to address patient “whole health” needs*

Growth of Social Workers in Healthcare

- Varied estimates of the national supply of social workers¹
- Social work is the largest workforce providing behavioral health care in the U.S.²
- Bureau of Labor and Statistics estimated 20% growth of social workers in healthcare by 2022³
- Social worker preparation for Integrated Care has already begun!
 - HRSA Behavioral Health Workforce Expansion and Training Grant
 - CSWE Integrated Behavioral Health Curriculum Development
 - Continuing Education Trainings offered at several Schools of Social Work

¹Skillman SM, Dahal A, Frogner BK, Stubbs BA. *National Supply Estimates of Specific Allied Health Occupations Using Different Data Sources: Data Snapshot – Social Workers*. Center for Health Workforce Studies, University of Washington, Dec 2016

²Manderscheid RW, Berry JT, eds. *Mental health, United States, 2004* (DHHS Pub. No. SMA 06-4195). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

³Bureau of Labor Statistics. U.S. Department of Labor. *Occupational outlook handbook*. 2015 Dec 17 [cited 2016 Aug 30].

Research Aims

- **Aim 1:** To describe the functions of social workers on interprofessional teams in integrated primary care
- **Aim 2:** To compare the health outcomes of patients provided intervention by interprofessional teams with social workers with patients receiving routine care

Systematic Literature Review

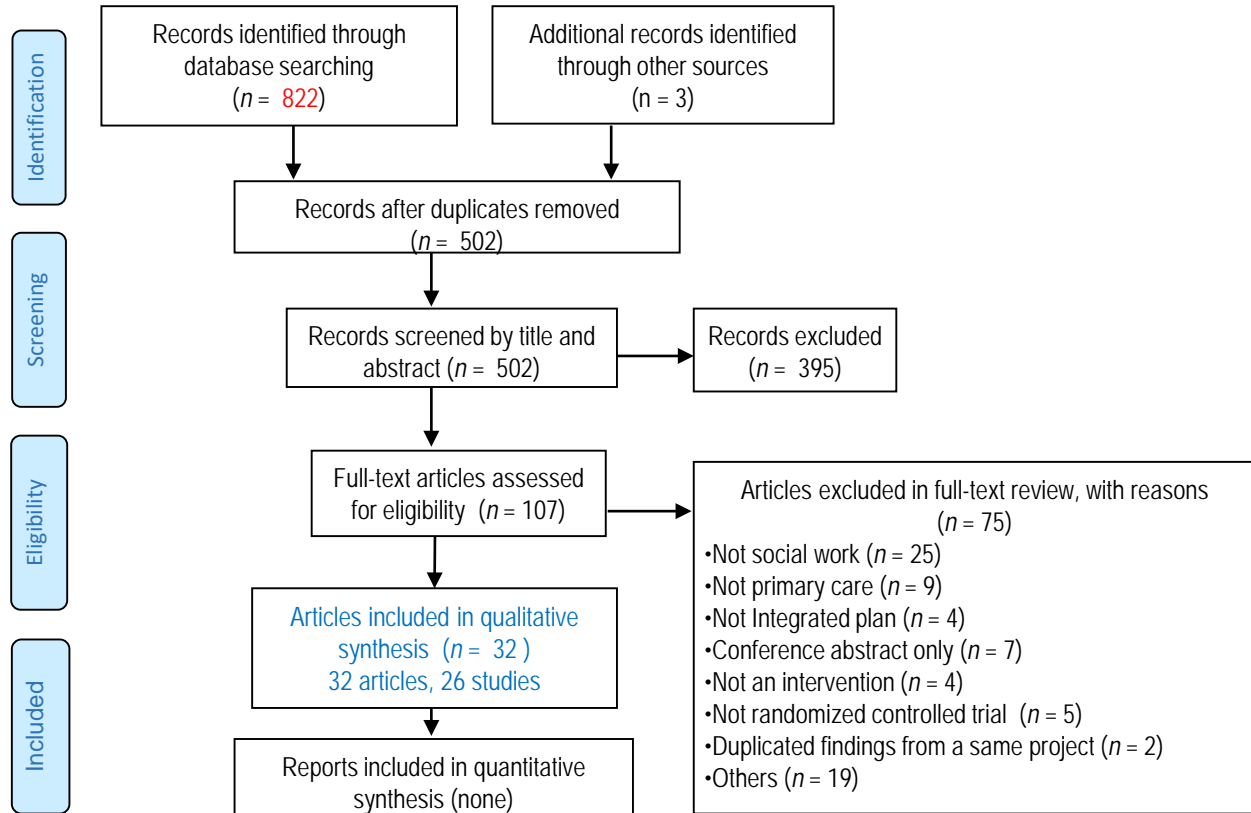
- We sought to systematically search the scientific literature for studies that met the following inclusion criteria:
 - Plan of care developed and provided by interprofessional team involving a **social worker(s)**
 - Primary care setting or intervention linked to primary care
 - Used an RCT (randomized) design
 - Published since 2000

Search Method—BIG PROBLEM!

- Published *PROSPERO* Protocol (CRD42015026695)
- 5-Phase “Deep Search” Strategy
 1. Developed Search Terms with Reference Librarian
 2. Two team members conducted systematic search of 9 electronic databases and completed title/abstract review
 3. Two team members completed full text review
 4. Completed forward and backward citation chaining
 5. Contacted authors of conference abstracts and of studies where SWs were not identified as intervention agents but were among authors, were acknowledged, etc.



PRISMA
2009 Flow
Diagram

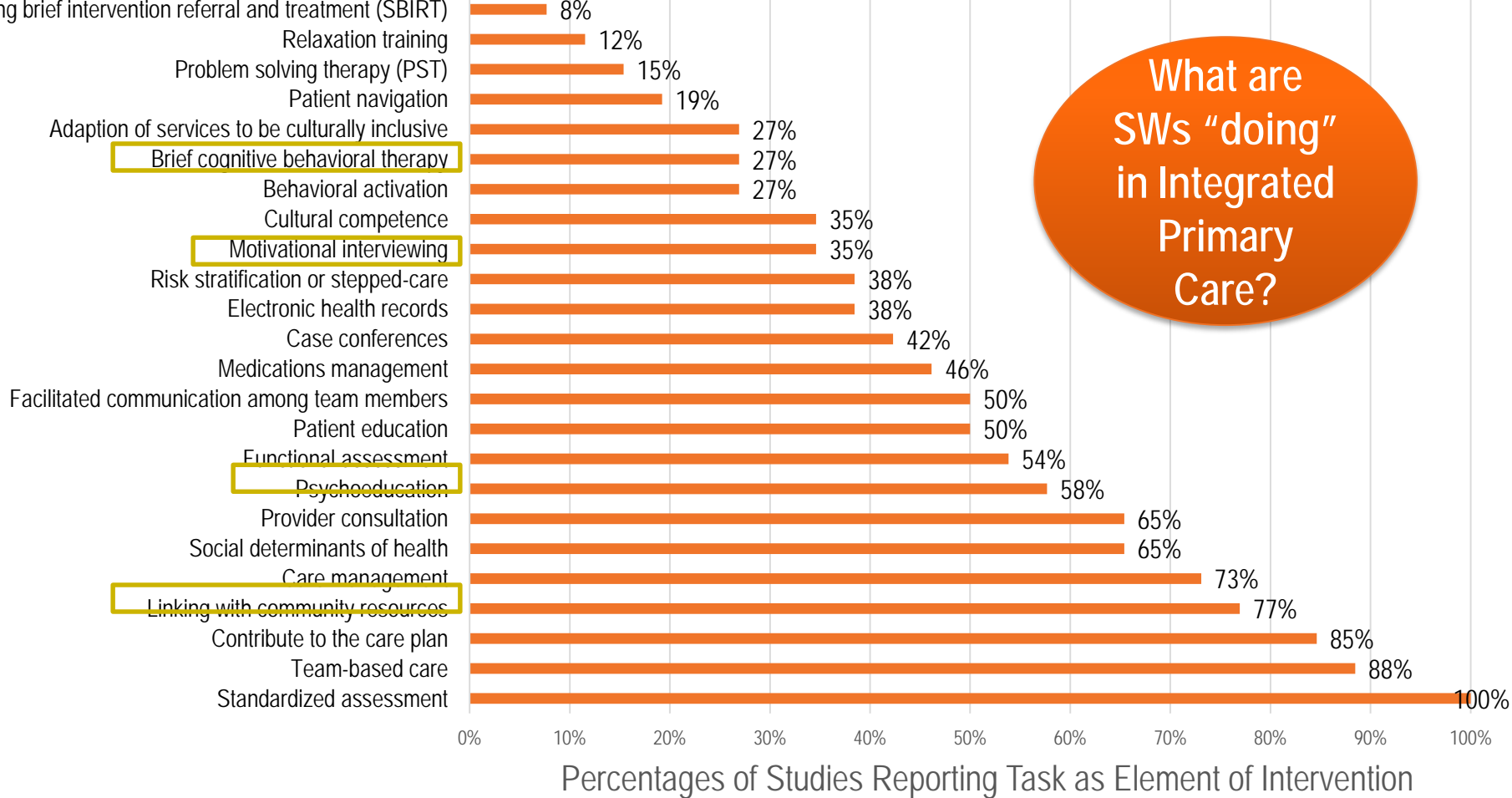


Results: 26 Studies Identified

- 23 of 26 studies were completed in the United States
- Interventions were implemented in a variety of health settings
 - *PCP clinics, Public Health Safety Net Clinics, Academic health care networks, VA, OBGYN, assisted living settings*
- Patient panel: White, females, age 65+
 - 9 studies with older adult population (+65 years)
 - 3 studies with child and family focused interventions

Results for Aim 1:

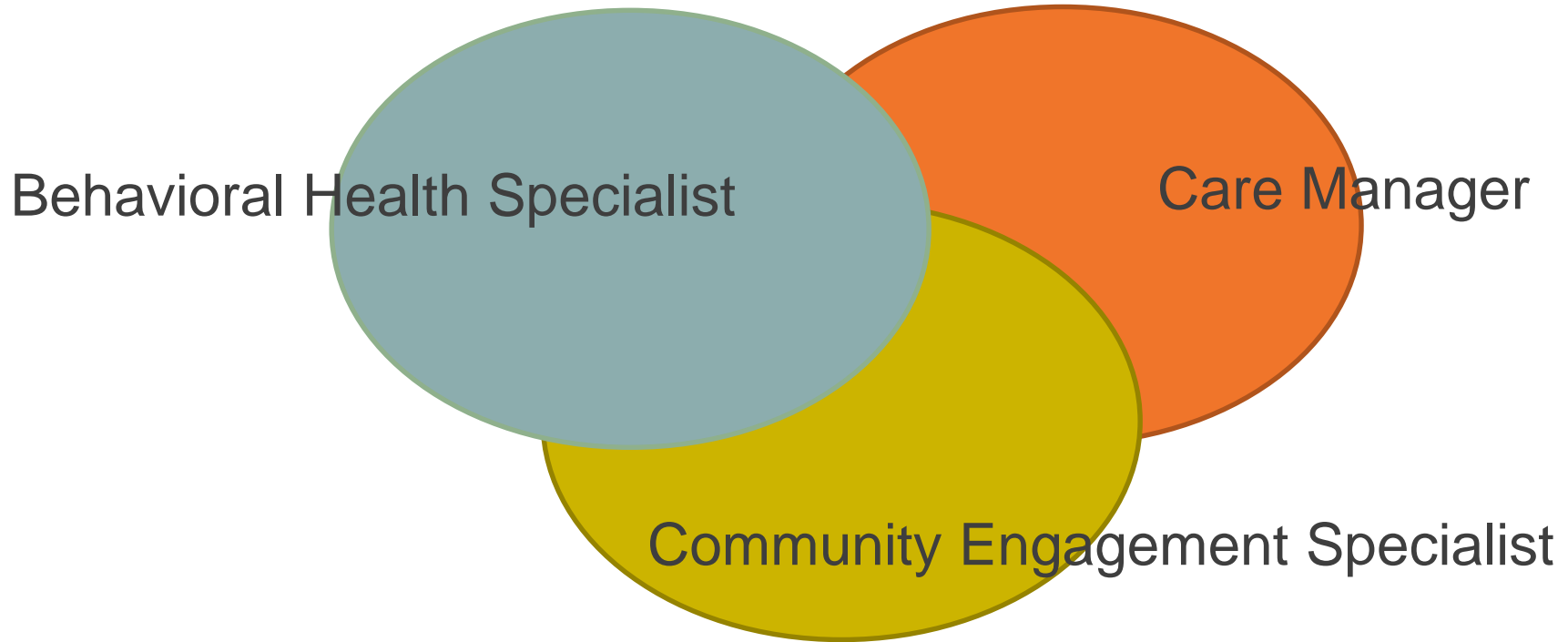
To describe the functions of social workers on interprofessional teams in integrated primary care



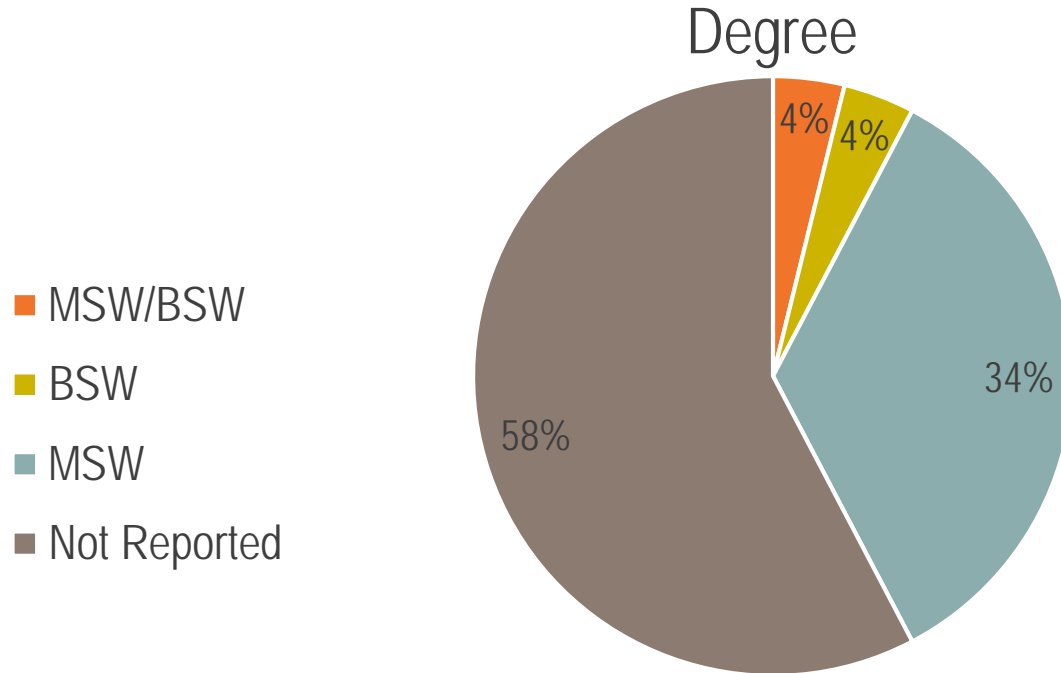
Identified Roles for Social Workers in Integrated Primary Care

- **Behavioral Health Specialist:** Focused on the assessment and brief treatment of behavioral health conditions using discrete evidence-informed interventions
- **Care Manager:** Focused on managing a patient's plan of care primarily for patients who have impacting social determinants of health
- **Community Engagement Specialist:** Focused on psychosocial assessment and referral to community services such as transportation and housing

3 Roles Usually Overlap



Who are the social workers working in Integrated Primary Care?



What's in a name?

- Social workers were often not titled as social workers on the interprofessional team
 - Depression Care Manager
 - Depression Clinical Specialist
 - Diabetes Depression Clinical Specialist
 - Family Support Specialist
 - Dementia Care Consultant
 - Depression Specialist
 - Anxiety Clinical Specialist
 - Care Manager
 - Case manager

Results for Aim 2

To compare the health outcomes of patients provided intervention by interprofessional teams comprised in part of social workers to health outcomes observed of patients in routine primary care

Study Findings

Outcome Domain	Evidence	Details
Overall Effect (n=26)	+	19 studies reported significant positive effects over control condition
Behavioral Health (n=12)	+	Strong evidence for the treatment of depression and anxiety
<i>Substance Use Disorders</i>	=	No evidence for decrease in substance use
General Health & Functioning (n=8)	+	Self-reported measure (SF-36) indicated of health and functioning
<i>Mortality</i>	=	No difference in mortality rates
Use of Health Care Services (n=11)	+/=	Decreased use of ER services; Increased use of appropriate health appointments; No difference in hospital admission rates, yet decreased length of hospital stay
Cost of Care (n=8)	=	Interventions overall were cost neutral

Limitations

- Outcomes are attributed to interprofessional teams
- Included only RCT design
- Reporting and publication bias
- Studies may have been excluded if authors did not report specific profession of person providing the intervention

Conclusions

- **Social Worker Core Tasks:** Standardized assessment, Care Management, Community Engagement, and Brief Behavioral Health Intervention
- **Compared to usual services, integrated primary care comprised in part of social work:**
 - costs no more than routine care, and
 - significantly improves patient level outcomes
 - Behavioral health
 - Self-reported health and functioning
 - Decrease length of hospital stay and emergency department visits

Challenges Social Workers are Facing in Integrated Primary Care Settings

- **Licensure Regulation**
 - Social work licensure does not align with scope of practice in health settings
- **Administration and Workflow Issues**
 - Confusion of social worker scope of practice in health system
 - Title and role confusion on the interprofessional team and within health system
- **Reimbursement Issues**
 - Most social workers are paid through system cost-savings
 - Systems not always utilizing billable codes for social work practice (e.g., CMS CPT Care Management Codes, Brief Behavioral Health Interventions, SBIRT)

How Can Systems Support Social Workers in Integrated Care?

- Modify education, regulation, and payment policy to support better deployment of social workers in integrated care settings
- Continued interprofessional education and development
- Educate other health workers in social work scope of practice
- NEXT STEPS: Collect primary data from social workers working in integrated care settings to compare to this work

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