

Suboptimal and dearth of social care and justice services in Nigeria's health sector: Evidence from the COVID-19 pandemic response

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Introduction

- Optimizing social protection in healthcare will demand recruiting and employing social care and justice professionals like social workers to deliver quality social care and justice services.
- While this is obtainable in most developed and some developing countries, social protection in Nigeria's healthcare has been poor, and the effects have been telling since the outbreak of COVID-19

Nigeria is neglecting social workers in the fight against COVID-19. Why it shouldn't

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Methods

- Interviews with 12 hospital social workers, 12 service users, and 12 frontline health workers from randomly selected tertiary, secondary and primary facilities.

Results

- Social workers were employed in most tertiary health facilities, as against none in primary healthcare.
- The competence of the employed social workers in tertiary health facilities was questioned, since a considerable number had no degree in social work. This had connections with their suboptimal performance, as they were often considered to source aids for indigents, and even asked to stay at home during COVID-19 lockdown.
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- The double burden of clinical and psychosocial care reportedly weighed clinicians down. And absence of 'voice' which expectedly should be advanced by social justice professionals was implicated in unaccountability

