

# **Social work and interdisciplinary practice: evidence from a multi-site audit**

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## **Background**

21<sup>st</sup> century health care in Australia promotes the benefits of groups of different health professionals working collaboratively towards a common goal, exhibiting flexibility and interdependence as they participate in shared professional activities. Interdisciplinary practice has become integrated as the preferred model of service delivery for health services which need to promote patient outcomes and satisfaction, contain costs and create efficiencies within increasingly complex systems and tight economic constraints.

## **Methods**

This research provides a descriptive analysis of hospital social work practice, utilising a multi-site audit undertaken by 17 Victorian hospitals and more than 400 social workers, across a single day.

## **Results**

Analysed through an interdisciplinary lens, the data offers insights into the complex, multifaceted role of social workers and evidences the ways in which they contribute to interdisciplinary practice.

## **Discussion**

The study provides a detailed understanding of the complex interplay of roles and tasks undertaken by social workers in both acute and sub-acute in-patient settings. This evidence can inform role-definition, workforce issues and planning for professional development and interdisciplinary education.