



THE EVOLUTION OF MEDICAL SOCIOLOGY

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Abstract

This article analyzes information regarding medical sociology and the stages of its formation. The authors present their views on the development of medical sociology in our country and certain issues related to its scientific methodology.

Keywords: methodology, research in natural sciences, social pathology, issues of medical knowledge and culture in public administration, social institutions.

INTRODUCTION.

In accordance with modern concepts of the healthcare system, activities aimed at protecting citizens' health extend far beyond the boundaries of medicine and pharmacy. The overall health of an individual is significantly influenced by an ecologically safe living environment, working conditions, lifestyle, recreational opportunities, dietary habits, and the socio-psychological climate in relationships with others, society, and the state. The health status of a particular individual is determined by heredity, age, the organism's adaptive capacity, its functional state, and the combined influence of environmental factors.

For the effective organization of the healthcare system, it is necessary to identify key medical and sociological factors, construct standardized medical and sociological models of fundamental medical and social processes, determine the strength and nature of each identified factor's impact on public health and medical institutions, and study structural and functional changes in healthcare institutions in the context of ongoing social reforms. In a market economy, the successful development of medicine, healthcare, medical sciences, and education requires mastery of methodological tools for medical and sociological research.

These analytical capabilities primarily define the relevance of medical sociology as a scientific discipline, whose primary objective is to provide detailed theoretical and empirical descriptions of healthcare, medical, and public health issues, as well as to identify their development prospects. This also includes comparative analysis with the historical experiences and similar systems of other countries.

Moreover, the current state of domestic medical sociology is shaped by efforts to enhance its methodological foundation, actively study and adapt the scientific developments and recommendations of leading foreign schools and conceptual frameworks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The history of the development of medical sociology consists of several stages, which can be divided into the following periods:

The Early Period

This period marks the emergence and initial development of medical sociology as an independent discipline, covering the 16th to 19th centuries. To this day, various scholars have attempted to link the origins of medical sociology to different stages in the evolution of medicine and healthcare. [1] On a global scale, the scientific and theoretical conclusions of the

renowned German scholar M. Susser hold significant importance in this field. As M. Susser noted, the earliest medical sociological studies on health were analyzed in V. Petty's work on political economy, Political Arithmetic. [2]

Professor K. Winter attempted to substantiate the claim that the origins of medical sociology date back to the mid-19th century. Meanwhile, Soviet-era scholars I. V. Vengrova (1970) and Yu. A. Shilinis (1986) associated the emergence of medical sociology with the works of McIntyre (1895). [3]

Globally, the advancement of knowledge in the natural sciences progressed within a scientific framework during the 16th and 17th centuries. A notable example of this is the research conducted by C. Linnaeus and his contemporaries. Such studies underscored the significance of investigating society and the role of medicine within it.

The first stage of medical sociology's formation

This stage spans from the early 20th century until the First World War. At the beginning of the 20th century, E. Blackwell's two-volume collection Essays on Medical Sociology (1902) and the book Medical Sociology (1910) were published. A. Grotjahn's work Social Pathology (1912) was of great importance for the advancement of medical sociology, as it outlined the fundamental principles of studying diseases from a social perspective—principles that remain relevant today. [4]. During this period, social-statistical studies of a medical and sociological nature were conducted in the United States. These studies, which sought to link economic dynamics with public health indicators and explain these correlations within the framework of sociological theories, can be regarded as the first medical sociological research efforts.

Medical sociology in the former Soviet Union. In the early 20th century, sociological methods and theories were already being applied in the field of medicine within the Russian Empire. This development was influenced by research conducted in Western countries, particularly in Germany. The German medical tradition played a leading role in shaping medical sociology in Russia.

In 1909, at the renowned V. M. Bekhterev Psychoneurological Institute in Russia, Z. G. Frenkel taught sociology, later establishing the first Department of Social Hygiene at what is now the Academy of Preventive Medicine. This milestone marked the institutionalization of medical sociology in Russia.

Russia, as a vast colonial empire, approached healthcare and public health policies in its peripheral territories primarily from the standpoint of colonial interests. This approach was particularly evident in Central Asia, where medical policies were largely limited to ensuring the health of Russian military personnel and administrative officials stationed in the region. In most cases, these efforts were confined to preventive measures against widespread epidemics and did not extend beyond such emergency responses.

For this reason, it would be unfounded to claim that the early stages of state development in the former Soviet republics of contemporary Central Asia actively engaged in medical sociology. Historically, this region has been one of the cradles of medical science since antiquity and the early medieval period, producing renowned physicians and scholars such as Ibn Sina and Abu Bakr al-Razi. The role of medicine in governance and societal development was recognized as a key policy direction in centralized states that emerged in the region. The existing educational system, from primary schooling to higher education in madrasas, included medical sciences as mandatory and essential subjects, while public health awareness and medical culture were actively promoted within society.

The second stage of medical sociology's formation.

This stage primarily covers the period between the First and Second World Wars.

In the West, the official emergence of medical sociology is often dated to 1923, when N. Sigerist's foundational research was published in the United Kingdom. [5] By this time, in the Soviet Union, local researchers had conducted medical sociological studies in major cities such as Moscow, Leningrad, Riga, and Kharkov. These studies focused on the social consequences of alcoholism, mental illnesses, prostitution, and other issues negatively affecting societal progress.

During this period, Western countries also recognized medical sociology as a distinct branch of sociology. Key works included W. Stem's *Social Factors in Medical Development* (1941) and L. Henderson's *The Doctor and the Patient as a Social System* (1935). Shortly thereafter, R. Faris and W. Dun conducted studies on the social conditions of schizophrenia patients hospitalized for treatment (*Mental Disorders in Urban Areas*, 1939). Similarly, N. Rowland described interpersonal relationships among schizophrenia patients in psychiatric hospital wards (*Psychiatry*, 1938). These studies established correlations between the prevalence of schizophrenia and patterns of urban social stratification. While the sociological generalizations made in these studies were not always supported by in-depth analysis, they nevertheless provided a foundation for further research into the relationship between social processes and mental health, with implications extending to contemporary studies on leisure activities and their outcomes.

The development of medical sociology as an independent discipline.

The period of medical sociology's development as an independent discipline spans from the 1950s to the 1980s. Following World War II, medical sociology emerged as a distinct academic field. In addition to physicians specializing in medical sociology, a broad range of professional sociologists began contributing to the study of its problems.

By the 1950s, stable methodologies for understanding the role of medicine, the healthcare system, the patient's position in modern socio-economic conditions, and the sociological need for medical assistance had been established in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and other countries. The mid-1950s marked a significant phase in the development of medical sociology in the U.S., exemplified by the New Haven Study by Hollingshead and Redlich, which focused on psychiatric data and emphasized the social distribution of mental illness. During this period, several socio-epidemiological and medical-sociological studies were initiated in the U.S. and the U.K. The primary goal of these studies was to verify the key theoretical models in sociology, social psychology, and social medicine.

The socio-medical understanding of health and illness helped define the subject of medical sociology in contemporary terms. [5] This subject includes the social determinants of public health, the influence of social processes and institutions on health, and the healthcare system as a type of social organization.

The current state of medical sociology. The current stage of medical sociology spans from the 1980s to the present day.

Modern Western medical sociology tends to avoid overarching theoretical generalizations. Within contemporary sociology, medical sociology is viewed by many scholars as either a subfield of sociology or medicine, or as an interdisciplinary science positioned "at the intersection" of both fields. [6] Various terms have been used in literature to refer to this discipline, including the sociology of health and illness, the sociology of health and medicine,



medical sociology, sociology in medicine, the sociology of healthcare, social medicine, and social epidemiology.

This situation has, in turn, led to the standardization of research on the individual activities of nurses, physicians, and patients within medical sociology.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Currently, there is a lack of theoretical concepts in medical sociology. The present situation is largely linked to the rapid development of medical and social technologies, which is a result of the modern processes in post-industrial society. Modern high-tech healthcare systems, requiring specialized knowledge and engaging millions of people in their operations, are rapidly advancing in the areas of treatment, diagnostics, and prevention. This has led to a fundamental shift in the behavioral stereotypes and ideas related to illness and health, which no longer align with previous theoretical concepts.

Efforts by medical sociologists aim to define the essence of social changes and understand the nature of health institutions, focusing on their medical and organizational activities. Additionally, these efforts aim to create adequate models for understanding individual behaviors.

The development of medical sociology in Uzbekistan. The development of medical sociology in Uzbekistan is connected to the situation in the former USSR. One of the earliest definitions of medical sociology in the Soviet Union was proposed by N. Dobronravov in 1924. [7] According to Dobronravov, medical sociology is a section of sociology that studies the social problems related to health, illness, and medical care, as well as the role of public health and labor capacity in social development. Later, the renowned scholar M.A. Anoxin outlined the tasks of medical and health sociology, considering it a field concerned with the sociological aspects of healthcare's prevention, treatment, and patient rehabilitation, including both social and labor rehabilitation.

In the 1960s, the official recognition of social hygiene as a distinct sociological field coincided with the acknowledgment of sociology itself. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a wide range of medical, social, and medical-sociological issues began to be actively studied in the USSR. Fundamental theoretical works in medical sociology emerged during this time, with notable scholars such as Yu.P. Lisisin, G.I. Tsaregorodsev, E.M. Izutkin, I.V. Davidovskiy, V.P. Petlenko, and G.X. Shingarov contributing to the field. [8]

Research focused on the socio-economic factors in the functioning of medical institutions, as well as the economic consequences of phenomena and processes in the preservation of public health, attracted particular attention. Comparative studies of health systems in various countries were also emphasized.

The next phase of local medical sociology involved the creation of the foundations of social marketing in healthcare. Healthcare and medicine were studied not only with statistical methods but also from a sociological perspective, focusing on social behavior. This approach provided an opportunity to explore pressing issues in healthcare, including understanding medical-social systems and social processes in an integrated way, identifying the social mechanisms and consequences of transformation processes.

The extensive empirical medical and sociological data collected during this period formed a reliable basis for comparative research and enabled a better understanding of the real forms of reforming Russia's healthcare system. The modern phase of the development of local medical sociology retains the theoretical and methodological achievements of earlier stages, preserves

the developed scientific traditions, and creates new theoretical directions based on this foundation.

The necessity of a sociological approach to the healthcare system and its methodological foundations is also of great importance. In the modern world, medicine – including healthcare – sometimes has a greater impact on people than politics and economics, as it is one of the most crucial sectors for individuals. The healthcare system affects not only the individual but also the entire life of society. Understanding the role of medicine, medical practice, and healthcare in the social system, as well as the medical, social, economic, and political issues of healthcare, has found its place in medical sociology.

THE RESULTS.

Medical sociology, utilizing sociological approaches, aims to develop additional socio-psychological measures for the prevention, maintenance, and strengthening of citizens' health and labor activity, as well as for prolonging life. It studies:

- The role and significance of the healthcare system in societal life;
- The impact of socio-economic factors on the health status of the population and the organization of medical care across different social strata;
- The functioning and development of social processes occurring within the healthcare system, its institutions, and medicine as a social institution.

At the same time, medical sociology:

- Considers the functions of medicine not only as treating diseases, alleviating physical suffering, and assisting individuals with disabilities but also as providing social support to all those in need within society;
- Examines the probability of disease occurrence and its treatment perspectives while taking into account social, cultural, psychological, and other factors;
- Studies the processes of socialization in healthcare, analyzing the behaviors of patients and physicians, as well as individual and public attitudes toward health and illness from a sociological perspective;
- Analyzes the state of public health and the organization of medical care using sociological methods, considering socio-economic factors;
- Investigates the mechanisms of social interaction and movement of social institutions (such as groups, social statuses, roles, values, norms, and sanctions) that influence human health and disease.

CONCLUSION.

From the early stages of human development to the present time, health has been one of the fundamental conditions for human survival. In the stability and progress of society, the role of the population's health has always been of great significance in all periods.

Medical sociology views and studies the healthcare sector as a major social institution and an important system within the structure of society. The existing social determinism in this field, the development of social concepts formed within the healthcare system, the social harmony in the field of medicine, as well as the sociological analysis of the issues in medicine, the social status of the medical profession, and the relationship between doctor and patient, are all studied within the framework of social research in medicine. The importance of studying these aspects today as a distinct field of sociology is based on these factors.

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