Toward a More Global Understanding of Military Social Work Practice

International Military Social Work Study Findings

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Research Team

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Military Social Work (MiSW)

Social Workers employed by Specialized Government Agencies to Assist Veterans and Their Families

Social Workers employed by Defense Departments / Ministries to assist Active Duty Military and Their Families

Social Workers employed by Voluntary Agencies to Assist Active Duty Military and Veterans and Their Families
MilSW Parameters for the Study

‘Civilian’ MilSW  ←  Social Workers employed by Defense Departments / Ministries to assist Active Duty Military and their Families  →  ‘Uniformed’ MilSW

- NAVY
- ARMY
- AIR FORCE
Study Aim:
• Develop a more global understanding of military social work practices within Departments / Ministries of Defense

Scope and inclusion criteria:
• All IASSW countries that employ professional social workers within their Departments/ Ministries of Defense
Study Recruitment Procedure

Inquiries to 1) National level SW organizations
2) IASSW country representative
3) Defense departments/ministries
4) Search for country’s MilSW literature

Identification of key informants in countries that met MilSW study criteria

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with country key informants via phone/skype
Data collection & analysis

Interviews were transcribed
Transcript then returned to key informant for review and approval

Qualitative Data Analysis using Google Sheets and ATLAS Ti

Dissemination and discussion of findings – IMiLSW conference 24-26 April 2019
Interview Protocol: MilSW Areas of Inquiry

- Organizational Structure, Practice Settings, Roles
- Theoretical Perspectives and Practice Models
- Ethical Tensions
- Veteran Interface
- Within Country Inter-professional Relationships
- Cross Country Social Work Relationships
- Military Social Work and Education
- Strengths, Challenges and Future Directions
76 Countries Explored for MiISW

- 25 Identified as having MiISW
- 15 Provided Interview Data
- 22 Identified as not having MiISW
- 29 MiISW Status Unknown

Data Collection status June 2018
### MilSW Countries:
**Key Informant Data for Study (15)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
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<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<td>The Netherlands</td>
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<td>MilSW Countries: No Key Informant Interview Data (10)</td>
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<td>○ Saudi Arabia</td>
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<td>○ Zimbabwe</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Countries Confirmed to Not Have MilSW (22)

* Additional information re: status of MilSW development provided

- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Bosnia & Herzegovina
- Cambodia
- **China** *
- Costa Rica
- Croatia
- Ethiopia
- Haiti
- Hong Kong
- Iceland
- **Italy** *
- Jamaica
- **Japan** *
- Kenya
- Malaysia
- Nepal
- **Slovakia** *
- Sweden
- **Ukraine** *
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
MilSW Status Unknown (29)

- Albania
- Austria
- Belgium
- Chile
- Czech Republic
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- Fiji
- Greenland
- Guyana
- India
- Indonesia
- Kyrgyzstan
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Mexico
- Namibia
- Norway
- Philippines
- Portugal
- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Republic of Kosovo
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Switzerland
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- Uganda
Military Social Work Timeline

- United States (1940s)
- Denmark (1951)
- United Kingdom (1965)
- South Africa (1968)
- Finland (1990)
- Turkey (1997)
- New Zealand (2000)
- Taiwan (1998)
- Trinidad & Tobago (2008)

Australia (1940s)
Canada (1943)
Germany (1955)
Israel (1967)
Netherlands (1980s)
Ireland (1992)
South Africa (1968)
United States (1940s)
United Kingdom (1965)
Turkey (1997)
New Zealand (2000)
# Approximate Number of Military Social Workers Per Country

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>UNIFORMED</th>
<th>CIVILIAN</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>CANADA</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>197</td>
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<tr>
<td>DENMARK</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td><strong>FINLAND</strong>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>GERMANY</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>310</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRELAND</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td><strong>ISRAEL</strong>*</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NETHERLANDS</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW ZEALAND</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUTH AFRICA</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>132</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TAIWAN</strong>*</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRINIDAD &amp; TOBAGO</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TURKEY</strong>*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>2550</td>
<td>3220</td>
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</table>

*Countries with conscription*
‘Civilian’ MiLSW only

Australia
Denmark
Germany
Ireland
New Zealand
Turkey
United Kingdom

‘Uniformed’ & Civilian MiLSW

Canada
Finland
Israel
The Netherlands
South Africa
Taiwan
Trinidad & Tobago
USA
Findings and Discussion:

- Military Social Work and Education
- Practice Settings and Roles
- Theoretical Models and Practice Perspectives
- Ethical Tensions
- Veteran Interface
# MiLSW Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civilian Universities (with MiLSW Specialization or Course)</th>
<th>Military University (with MiLSW Specialization or Course)</th>
<th>Field Training / Internship</th>
<th>Other</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United States Taiwan</td>
<td>United States Canada</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theoretical Perspectives

- CBT
- MI
- None Specified
- Other
- P/E Systems
- Solution-Focused
- Strengths
Practice Settings

![Practice Settings Graph](https://via.placeholder.com/150)
Military Unit Practice Setting:

“We think of providing a service to the unit as a whole and so the unit is our client. It is a community and we serve the community as a whole. And most would say that in community work, you must show your face and do the “walk about.” You must just be present in the community. So we attend parades, weekly prayers, family events, weekly assembly - even if not doing anything we are just present…”

– Key Informant from South Africa
Definition of Occupational Social Work
Googins & Godfrey, 1985

“A field of practice in which social workers attend to the human and social needs of employees in the work milieu, by designing and executing appropriate interventions to ensure healthier individuals and environments”.
In what ways does the MilSW practice setting (e.g. clinic or military unit etc.) influence the direct and indirect SW roles and approach to practice?
Ethical Tensions

What ethical issues are most typically encountered by military social workers within the Departments/Ministries of Defense?

- Confidentiality – Client’s right to privacy vs. military’s “need to know”
- Dual loyalty – Client/family well being vs. military mission.
Ethical ‘tension’ or ethical ‘conflict’?

“For an ethical legal tension or difference to become a conflict, the provider’s obligations under the law and the provider’s obligations under his or her professional code of ethics must be mutually exclusive.”

Johnson, Grasso & Maslowski, 2010
Approaches to resolving ethical tensions/conflicts

- Military Manual
- Stealth
- Best Interest

Confidentiality Issues
Dual Loyalty Issues
None Identified
Other Ethical Issues
Unknown
Ethical Tensions
Question for Discussion

• How do ethical tensions get managed by military social workers in your country?
Veteran Interface

Limited Interface with Veterans

Case Management Responsibilities with Veterans

Integrated Delivery to Military and Veterans
Veteran Interface
Questions for Discussion

Thinking about the needs of military service members and their families as they transition to civilian life, how can military social work models of practice better support the transition from military service to civilian life?