

Work

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF LARYNGECTOMEE CLUBS

for

LARYNGECTOMEES

Social



AWARENESS
CAMPAIGN

THE MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKER'S ROLE WITH LARYNGECTOMY PATIENTS

Entering hospital for any form of treatment is a frightening prospect.

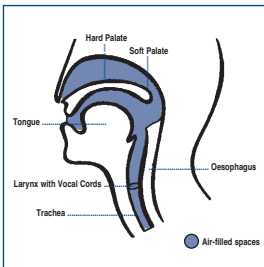
However, for people undergoing a laryngectomy this fear is increased by the knowledge that they have cancer and are to have mutilating surgery which will leave them with a permanent stoma and communication difficulties.

The role of the medical social worker can be summarised as follows:

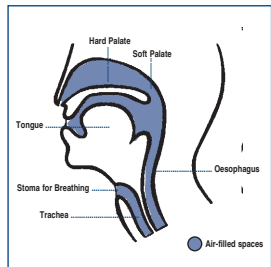
1 To assess the patient's perception of this surgery and its implications.

The medical social worker will discuss with the laryngectomee their readjustment to daily living when they get home. They might have anxieties about their accommodation and feelings of isolation because of their lack of voice.

If depression, anxiety and pain is a problem the medical social worker will refer back to her medical and nursing colleagues in the multidisciplinary team meetings – liaising also with the Macmillan clinical nurse specialists.



The normal voice & breathing mechanism before Laryngectomy



The mechanism for voice and breathing after Laryngectomy

2 To provide support for family and carers at a time when they are having to come to terms with the illness of the person they care for and love and with future uncertainty.

The medical social worker will refer the patient on discharge to her colleagues in the community. The hospital social worker will work out a package of care for 4-6 weeks then her community social worker will take over, each patient is assessed on their own particular needs and passed back to the medical team when necessary.

3 To advise on welfare benefits. This is essential for a lot of laryngectomees and their families who need support and information to help allay their anxiety at the prospect of living on a reduced income.

The social worker should be able to advise on which forms to complete, to liaise with the D.S.S., arrange rehousing and apply to the MacMillan Fund or other organisations for grants for such essential items as liquidisers, emergency alarm systems etc.

The medical social worker can also fill in the forms for the people who have nobody to do this for them. When a person is recovering from a laryngectomy the last thing they wish to do is fill in forms.

During this period of trauma and upheaval, life for laryngectomees and their carers can be confusing and frustrating.

As a member of a multi-disciplinary team, the social worker can help to create an invaluable support framework for patients while they learn to cope with life on their own again.

For further information and for details of your local laryngectomee clubs, please contact:

The National Association of Laryngectomee Clubs (NALC)

- See address on back page.

Macmillan Cancer Support

89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ

Tel: 020 7840 7840 Fax: 020 7840 7841

www.macmillan.org.uk



Produced and distributed with the compliments of

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LARYNGECTOMEE CLUBS
Lower Ground Floor, 152 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9TR

Telephone: 020 7730 8585 Fax: 020 7730 8584

www.laryngectomy.org.uk

An associated charity of Macmillan Cancer Support