Reliable recognition of language barriers and improved collaboration between physicians and other healthcare professionals with interpreters

TeamInterpret

Project management
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Description of the project
The increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in Germany confronts the system of patient care with growing challenges. Language barriers frequently impede the provision of healthcare to patients and families with limited German proficiency in the inpatient and outpatient setting. Language barriers are an important barrier to access health care services for many patients. They also can have a negative impact on quality of care and patient safety.

Language barriers are often not recognized by physicians and other clinicians. To date, no guidelines are in place on how to diagnose and document a patient's linguistic background and preferences. As a consequence, professional interpreters are used only on an irregular basis. In addition, most physicians and clinicians have not been trained on how to collaborate with interpreters to optimize the quality of communication. Further, interpreters usually work in various settings within the community. Only few have had in depth experiences within the clinical environment and opportunities to reflect their work experiences with clinical staff.

The seminar TeamInterpret offers a novel opportunity for physicians, other clinicians and interpreters to learn with and about each other. Specifically, participants will learn how to explore a patient's linguistic background, to recognize language barriers and to improve their collaboration with each other within a clinical conversation.

During the 3h seminar participants will

- receive evidence-based information on the relevance of language barriers in the clinical setting
- reflect on previous experiences regarding different ways to overcome language barriers and their collaboration with interpreters
- have the opportunity to engage in a simulated encounter with non-German patients to actively improve their collaboration with each other.

The seminar methodology builds on the model of relational learning (Browning et al. 2006) and the Program to Enhance Relational and Communication Skills, PERCS (Browning et al. 2007, Meyer et al. 2009). PERCS provides a way to integrate experiential learning through simulation, reflection of owns role and the role of other professionals.

The seminar is open to physicians and other clinicians in the area of Freiburg and Suedbaden. It will be offered through the Academy of the University Medical Center Freiburg and the Aerztekammer Suedbaden (the local medical association).

The seminar will be evaluated through a survey prior to the seminar, directly after and 3 months after the intervention. Dimensions will include participants' satisfaction, attitudes toward interprofessional collaboration and frequency of use of interpreters (physicians and clinicians). Drawing from the experiences made through year 1 of the project, we will produce an educational movie in collaboration with the University of Applied Sciences Mainz. The movie can be used in online educational offerings as well as in seminars.