

Final Report MFH Project at: Kolding Hospital, Department of Paediatric, Denmark

Improving Interpreting Service and Clinical Communication with Migrants

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Introduction

From 2002-2004 Kolding Hospital participated as the Danish representative in the European project "Migrant-Friendly Hospitals". The aim was to improve the care and treatment of migrant patients. Kolding Hospital participated in the overall project and in Subproject A (SPA) "Improving interpreting in Clinical Communication".

Kolding hospital is a general hospital with a capacity of approximately 300 beds and 1250 staff members. The hospital has specialised medical departments and surgical departments and is also specialised in obstetrics, paediatrics and neonatology.

The proportion of migrants is not registered, but for the Department of Paediatrics it is assumed that among the 4500 admitted children per year, the proportion of migrants (or non-nationals) is about 7-10%. They are from Bosnia, Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq and Africa.

Among the native population as well as the migrant population, children are relatively frequently admitted to hospitals, so in order to run the project in a department where migrants were represented, the Department of Paediatrics was chosen as the setting for the Danish pilot project.

It is well known that the increasing diversity of our patient populations means an increased risk of misunderstandings and communication problems, and that the diversity and communication barriers pose new challenges to hospitals and staff.

The subproject – "Improving Interpreting in Clinical Communication"

In recognition of the fundamental principle that non-local language speakers, migrant populations and ethnic minority groups must be able to communicate with their clinicians, express their needs and receive complete information about their care, the Department of Paediatrics participated in the subproject "Improving Interpreting in Clinical Communication".

Based on the local needs assessment, review of the literature and the benefit of the European workshops, the following issues and activities were chosen.

Issues	Activities
Telephone interpreting services	Telephone interpreting services were established using the tool <i>Sound Station</i> .
Visual orientation at the department	Signposting has been improved with pictograms.
Information for patients translated into the most commonly used languages	A number of information leaflets for patients have been translated by an external agency for use at the hospital.
Provision of information regarding treatment and post-discharge care in appropriate languages and formats	Patient information regarding treatment and post-discharge care has been translated into the most common foreign languages

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Issues	Activities
Staff training for MF	All new staff receive lessons about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the policy for using the interpreting service - how to use the Sound Station for telephone interpreting - cultural competence training

One of the most successful activities needs a further description – it is telephone interpreting using the Sound Station. It is a hand free phone with three loudspeakers to be used for interpreting by phone.

Advantages by using the Sound Station:

- It is simple to handle, because it works like a common telephone.
- There are no transport costs. The interpreter stays at home or wherever he or she might be.
- It's suitable for acutely admitted children and urgent problems because the contact with the interpreter can be established with short notice.
- It's possible to get a more direct contact between clinician and patient because it might be difficult not to talk directly to the interpreter, if he or she is in the room instead of the patient.
- It has a high quality of sound compared to interpreting by a common telephone.

Results

It was shown in a staff questionnaire for the assessment of interpreting access and service quality in clinical encounters before and after implementation of activities that the service has been improved satisfactorily. A selection of the results is presented below.

Results printed in black colour refer to the 2nd survey. The differences between Survey 1 and Survey 2 are given in bold italics.

Total N = 51 Questionnaires. Response rate: 75 %

1. Which resources do you use to facilitate communication with patients who have a limited command of the local language?

	Always	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Never	Not available	n
3.1. Adult relative or friend of the patient	2,0%	24,0%	44,0%	26,0%	4,0%	0,0%	50
diff. to S1	<i>-1,9%</i>	<i>-19,1%</i>	<i>4,8%</i>	<i>14,2%</i>	<i>2,0%</i>	<i>0,0%</i>	<i>-1</i>
3.2. Professional interpreting service, either face-to-face or over the phone	8,2%	65,3%	22,4%	2,0%	2,0%	0,0%	49
diff. to S1	<i>4,2%</i>	<i>9,3%</i>	<i>-9,6%</i>	<i>-4,0%</i>	<i>-0,0%</i>	<i>-0,0%</i>	<i>-1</i>

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2. When accessing the services of a professional interpreter or staff member assigned to do professional interpreting, how in general would you rate the quality of their service?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	n
4.1. Interpreters are available in a timely manner.	21,7%	71,7%	6,5%	0,0%	0,0%	46
diff. to S1	-1,2%	19,6%	-18,5%	0,0%	0,0%	-2

3. Overall, how would you rate the quality of interpreting provided by the hospital's interpreting service?

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	n
Overall	0,0%	21,7%	63,0%	15,2%	0,0%	46
diff. to S1	0,0%	4,3%	6,5%	-10,9%	0,0%	0

4. Overall, has your work situation improved through the measures implemented in the context of the project?

Improved much	Improved	No change	Worsened	Worsened much	Can't say	n
0,0%	34,1%	47,7%	0,0%	0,0%	18,2%	44

The tables show that now the staff use professional interpreters instead of relatives of the patient into a higher degree, which is an agreement with the hospital's policy of interpreting. Besides that, the tables show that the staff finds the quality of the interpreting service improved, which is very important in maintaining the staff's readiness to interpret.

34,1% of the staff has experienced that their work situation has been improved as a result of the intervention.

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The overall project – The strategy moving forward

In order to spread information about the experiences from the local project to the rest of the hospital and in order to fulfil some of the MFH criteria, following activities have been performed and the recommendations expressed:

Activity	Description of activities
Internal marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Presentations of MFH and the local project at a meeting for leaders at Fredericia and Kolding Hospitals- Training session for staff from different departments. Issues: MFH and the local project, policy for interpreting, cultural competence training- Publishing an article in our hospital newsletter
Recommendations to the other departments at the hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Improve the signposts using pictograms- Translation of relevant information – e.g. information about the department, discharge and follow-up procedures- Extend and improve quality of telephone interpreting by using Sound Stations
Recommendations to the management	<p>To raise awareness of the migrant patients' needs for interpretation, we recommend that all new staff receive lessons about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the policy for interpreting- cultural competence training <p>Establish coordination of booking interpreters in collaboration with the interpreting agency. In order to organize future developments we suggest the establishment of a permanent steering committee for MFH issues.</p>

Marketing activities

In order to spread the local experiences to other departments of the hospital and other hospitals following activities have been performed.

Presentations

- Rasmussen A, Ammentorp J. Migrant Friendly Hospitals. Feature day for staff members of Fredericia and Kolding Hospitals. October 2004
- Ammentorp J, Rasmussen AM. Migrant Friendly Hospitals. Management meeting at Fredericia and Kolding Hospitals. October 2004.
- Novak-Zezula S, Rasmussen AM, Fernandez Cuerra C, Mcdaid F, Chiarenza A Manning A. Improving interpreting in clinical communication. Experiences and results from the MFH



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project. Hospitals in a culturally diverse Europe - International conference about quality-assured health care and health promotion for migrants and ethnic minorities. Dec 9-11,2004 Amsterdam The Netherlands

- Rasmussen AM. Lecture in Migrant Friendly Hospital and cultural competence at the nursing school of Slagelse. November 2004
- Rasmussen AM. Ammentorp JA Presentation of Migrant Friendly Hospital at a staff meeting Kolding Hospital. Marts 2005.

Posters

- Ammentorp J, Kofoed PE, Rasmussen AM. Multi-lingual monitoring of the quality of care and treatment. Hospitals in a culturally diverse Europe - International conference about quality-assured health care and health promotion for migrants and ethnic minorities. Dec 9-11,2004 Amsterdam The Netherlands

Publications

- Ammentorp J, Rasmussen AM, Kofoed PE. Consistent quality of care and treatment to all patients in a culturally diverse Europe. Sygeplejersken. Submitted
- Rasmussen AM, Ammentorp J. Article regarding the final conference in Amsterdam. Health Promotion Hospitals. Not published yet.
- Press release
- Migrant Friendly Hospitals and the Amsterdam Declaration. Released by the management of Fredericia and Kolding Hospitals Januar 2005

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