

# migrant-friendly hospitals

## SPA: Improving Interpreting in Clinical Communication

Non-local language speakers, migrant populations and ethnic minority groups often are not able to communicate with their clinicians to receive complete information about their care. On the other side clinical staff often is not able to understand the patient's needs and to receive other relevant information from the patient.

Correspondingly MFH - needs assessment results show: language and communication is contemplated as the most important problem area in dealing with migrant populations and ethnic minorities in clinical routine.

Nine European hospitals (DK, EL, ES, FI, IR, IT, NE, SW, UK) participated in the project to improve clinical communication with migrant and ethnic minority patients with the following aims:

1. Professional interpreter services should be made available whenever necessary to ensure good communication between non-local language speakers and clinical staff.
2. Patients should be informed about language services available and how to obtain these services.
3. Clinical staff need to become empowered on how to work competently with interpreters to overcome language barriers and obtain better outcomes.
4. In addition patients education materials should be made available in non-local languages to assist with communication.

Measures were developed and implemented to improve clinical communication through telephone interpreting, face-to-face interpreting, intercultural mediation and written material as supporting communication

In a benchmarking evaluation design a pre- and a post-intervention staff survey and a patient survey were conducted.

General evaluation results show that the implemented measures were effective:

- Rate of interpreters being available in a timely manner(always or often) has increased: +17,5% (61,1% / 78,6%)
- Improvement of all defined quality indicators for interpreting services as i.e. introduction and role explanation by interpreter, accurately transmittance of information, clarification by interpreter, clarification of culturally beliefs and identification of patient's further needs by the interpreter can be observed
- Overall rating of interpreting services (excellent or very good) has increased: +21,3% (25,8% / 47,1%)
- Improvement of work situation through the measures implemented in the context of the project stated by 54,9% staff members

Experiences of the hospitals show that clinical communication is fundamental to effective health care: all patients, whether migrant or indigenous, have a right to effective clinical communication. Clinical communication for migrants can be consistently improved only if:

- it is integrated into a hospital's approach to diversity,
- it is sustained by becoming mainstream and not rely on local champions, and
- adequate political will and funding is assured.