

MHSN Forum: Racism & Health, 18 April 2018

“Our Stories, Our Voices”

– Professional Interpreters in Victoria’s Health Services

“Addressing Invisible Racism”

Robert Gruhn

Acting Senior Policy Officer, Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria - rgruhn@eccv.org.au



Racism & Health

- Systemic racism / structural discrimination/ institutional barriers

How does racism impact health?

→ Community perspective

→ *Consumer voices on existence of structural discrimination and the impacts on culturally diverse communities’ health outcomes*



Many culturally diverse health consumers still have low health literacy and little understanding of interpreter's role

- Our hypothesis

- Testing the hypothesis

- ✳ 2 Major metropolitan health services
- ✳ 278 respondents
- ✳ 13 languages
- ✳ 10 questions



- Additional consultations via online survey and focus group



Survey questions

- 1) How long have you been in Australia?
- 2) Do you find it hard to communicate with health professionals in English?
- 3) Do you use a family member to interpret for you when visiting this service?
- If 'Yes', why?
- 4) Have you used an interpreter when visiting a health service in the past?
- If 'Yes', was it helpful? / If 'No', why not?
- 5) Who requested the interpreter for you?
- Staff | GP | You/family
- 6) Do you think you will ask for an interpreter again? - If 'No', why not?
- 7) If you used an interpreter before, what do you think has been good about using one?
- 8) What do you think is bad or not helpful about using an interpreter?
- 9) Do you know it is your right to access professional interpreters free of charge when using a health service?
- 10) Did you know interpreters are bound by a Code of Ethics?



The survey results I

1) How long have you been in Australia?

< 5 years **29%** | 5-10 years **14.5%** | 10 years + **56.5%**

2) Do you find it hard to communicate with doctors / nurses / health professionals in English?

Yes: 72.5% **No: 2%** **Sometimes: 25.5%**

3) Do you use a family member to interpret for you when visiting this service?

If 'Yes', why?

Yes: 46% **No: 54%**



The survey results II

4) Have you used an interpreter when visiting a health service in the past. If 'Yes', was it helpful? If 'No', why not?

Yes: 95%

No: 5%

5) Who requested the interpreter for you?

Staff 60% | GP 0 | You/family 40%

6) Do you think you will ask for an interpreter again? If 'No', why not?

Yes: 96%

No: 4%



The survey results III

7) If you used an interpreter before, what do you think has been good about using one?

- *Understanding medical terminology/condition | Avoiding family members filtering information*

8) What do you think is bad or not helpful about using an interpreter?

- *Waiting times, privacy concerns, professionalism, gender*

9) Do you know it is your right to access professional interpreters free of charge when using a health service?

Yes: 86%

No: 14%

10) Did you know interpreters are bound by a Code of Ethics?

Yes: 46%

No: 54%



Consumer survey analysis

- Racism/ structural discrimination still exist in Victoria's health system
- Health consumer and family awareness
 - Awareness of Code of Ethics
- Negative experiences with interpreters
- Health service providers/ GPs need to be more proactive
- Interpreters as a health consumer right and cost





Conclusion & Key Recommendations

- **Government**
- **Industry**
- **Service providers**
- **Health consumers**
 - ECCV consumer awareness raising project(?)

**THANKS
FOR
LISTENING**



Full report at: <http://eccv.org.au/>

ECCV Discussion Paper (March 2017) "Our stories, our voices: culturally diverse consumer perspectives on the role of accredited interpreters in Victoria's health services"