

How to Raise a Good Health Care Interpreter

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1. What's a Health Care Interpreter?

1 - a. Definition

Health Care Interpreting is:

"Interpreting that takes place in health care settings of any sort, including doctor's offices, clinics, hospitals, home health visits, mental health clinics, and public health presentations. Typically the setting is an interview between a health care provider and a patient. "

-The Terminology of Health Care Interpreting; A Glossary of Terms

Health Care Interpreter

"Health Care Interpreter is one who:

- 1) Has been trained in health care interpreting
- 2) Adheres to the professional code of ethics and protocols of health care interpreters
- 3) Is knowledgeable about medical terminology
- 4) Can accurately and completely render communication from one language to another"

-California Standards for Healthcare Interpreters

1 - b. The Models of Health Care Interpreting

No Interpreter

An unacceptable approach, but frighteningly common

Chance Interpreter Model

"Ad hoc interpreter"

A family member, a bilingual staff member, or a self-declared bilingual

Bilingual Support Staff Model

May not be competent for accurate interpretation

Taken away from their regular jobs

Remote Interpreting Model

Telephone, or videoconferencing

On-demand access in a wide array of languages

Useful for in emergencies, for uncommon languages

"The AMDA International Medical Information Center"

Bilingual Provider Model

Difficult to find providers in all the different languages

The need outside the medical interview

Professional On-Site Interpreter Model

Full-time staff interpreters

Part-time staff interpreters

Contract with travel insurance companies

1 - c. The Roles of Health Care Interpreters

•Message Converter

•Message Clarifier

•Culture Clarifier.

•Patient Advocate

1 - d. Health Care Interpreter Training Programs

•Academic Training Programs

•Bilingual Health Care Employee Training Programs

•Community Training Programs

•Intensive Training of at least 40 hours

•Agency Training Programs

2. Health Care Interpreter Skills

2 - a. Basic Language Skills

- The most basic skill of interpreting

- Oral understanding and oral production

- Many existing English tests are not suitable for the assessment of the candidates

2- b. Code of Ethics

Some Questions to Discuss

1. In the course of an assignment, should an interpreter interpret statements which he/she knows to be untrue?
2. You arrive early for an interpreting assignment at a hospital. The client recognizes you as the interpreter and starts to tell you that he/she feels really depressed and is considering suicide. Would you advise the doctor of this conversation or would you keep it to yourself?
3. Should an interpreter interpret for friends and relatives?
4. You are sent by an agency to interpret for a client. The client brings a friend along to interpret and refuses your service. What would you do?

Code of Ethics

- Confidentiality
- Accuracy and Completeness
- Impartiality
- Professional Boundaries
- Professional Development
- Cultural Competence
- Respect for All Parties
- Professional Integrity

Ethical Decision Making Process

1. Ask questions to determine whether there is a problem.
2. Identify and clearly state the problem, considering the ethical principles that may apply and ranking them in applicability.
3. Clarify personal values as they relate to the problem.
4. Consider alternative actions, including benefits and risks.
5. Choose the action and carry it out.
6. Evaluate the outcome and consider what might be done differently next time.

Code of Ethics

Confidentiality

The interpreter shall treat as confidential all information learned in the performance of their professional duties. This means that interpreters will not disclose to anyone any information acquired on the job. Confidentiality is to be maintained in all situations except when the government mandates the disclosure of information in specific situations such as child abuse, elder abuse, or a person threatening harm to him/herself or others. Currently there are no specific legal guidelines for interpreter responsibilities regarding confidentiality. It is interpreter's responsibility to understand the standard operating procedures of the individual institution in question.

Accuracy and Completeness

The interpreter shall render the message faithfully, conveying the content and spirit of the original message while taking into consideration its cultural context. This means that interpreters shall interpret everything the speaker says without changing the meaning, conveying what is said and how it is said without additions, deletions or alterations, but with due consideration of the cultural context of both the sender and the receiver of the message. The interpreter must convey the meaning of gestures, body language, and tone of voice. Additionally, interpreters must reveal and correct any errors they have made during the interpretation.

Impartiality

The interpreter shall maintain impartiality and shall not counsel, advise or project personal biases or beliefs. Interpreters remain impartial by suspending judgment and making no personal comment on the content of the communication. They avoid distorting the message in favor of one party or the other. Under no circumstances should interpreters give advice to patients.

Professional Boundaries

The interpreter shall maintain the boundaries of the professional role, refraining from personal involvement. Interpreters need to avoid getting personally involved with the people for whom they interpret. This does not mean that interpreters cannot be friendly and caring. The development of rapport with patients and providers during a pre-session is a part of the interpreter's professional role and does not necessarily represent personal involvement.

Professional Development

The interpreters shall strive to continually further their knowledge and skills. Interpreters need to engage in ongoing professional development activities. They should improve upon their linguistic knowledge and maintain their interpreting skills by reading current literature and taking advantage of educational opportunities such as workshops, trainings, etc. They should also continue to expand their knowledge of the medical contexts in which they may be called to function and of the socio-cultural contexts including folk medicine and illnesses of the patient populations for whom they interpret.

Cultural Competence

The interpreter shall develop awareness of their own and other cultures in order to promote cross-cultural understanding. Interpreters should strive to bridge the cultural differences between all participating parties, by seeking to minimize, and if possible, to avoid potential misunderstanding based upon stereotyping or differing cultural practices, beliefs or expectations. Under certain conditions such as clashing cultural beliefs or practices, a lack of linguistic equivalency, or the inability of parties to articulate in their own words, the interpreter should assist by sharing cultural information or helping develop an explanation that can be understood by all.

Respect for All Parties

The interpreter shall strive to support mutually respectful interactions among all parties. Interpreters can help build mutual respect within the triadic relationship by responding in a supportive manner within the interpreter role, using rapport-building skills, respecting the experience or expertise of all parties, allowing physical privacy to the patient, refraining from influencing patient decisions, and treating all participating parties equally and with dignity.

Professional Integrity

The interpreter shall demonstrate professionalism and personal integrity. The following are some aspects of professionalism:

If the interpreter believes at any time that they may have interpreted inaccurately or incompletely, they will make this known and, if possible, provide a corrected interpretation.

An interpreter shall not accept an assignment, or shall withdraw from an assignment, in which they

- 1) Are not competent to interpret accurately and completely
- 2) Perceive a conflict of interest between their role as interpreter and their personal involvement with one of the parties in the interpretation
- 3) Is so impacted by the content to be interpreted that they become unable to interpret accurately and completely.

The fee agreed to between the interpreter and the contracting/employing agency shall be the only compensation the interpreter will accept. The interpreter will not accept additional compensation or considerations from any party in the interpreted session.

2 - c. Familiarity with Cultural Issues

- Insight in cultural nuances in the communities
- Understanding the similarities and differences between the biomedical culture and own culture
- Broader perspective in the different health care service areas
- Familiarity with the health care systems in both the host country and the country of origin

The Differences in Health Culture

A Case Study

A Japanese young man living in Vancouver suffered a head injury playing soccer. He went to a GP (General Practitioner) with a Japanese health care interpreter.

After the session with thorough and extensive observation (History taking & Physical examination), the young man was diagnosed as a minor concussion, and the GP concluded that a CT scan wasn't necessary.

The young man was worried about the possibility of a more serious head injury, and he was doubtful that the doctor could make such a diagnosis without a CT scan. He requested one, but he was denied.

After the session, the interpreter present, who had worked in the Japanese system for a number of years as a nurse, sympathized and agreed with the young man. The interpreter experienced a number of similar cases, in which Japanese doctors ordered a CT scan regardless of the physical result. So, he told the man that he was right and that the Canadian doctor should have ordered the CT scan.

As a result, the man felt that not only he wasn't properly cared for, but also that whole Canadian system was sub-standard or perhaps even racist. He wished that he could see a Japanese doctor for "proper care"...

Questions

1. What mistakes did the interpreter make?
2. What is/are the ethical principle(s) that he violated?
3. What should he have done?
4. What should he learn to be a good interpreter?

2 - d. Health Care Terminology

Health Care Terminology Categories

- Symptoms
- Anatomy
- Diseases
- Procedures / Tests
- Equipment
- Specialists / Departments
 - Treatment
- Medications
- .

Learning Tips

Layman's terms not jargon

Everyday Expressions	Technical Terms
Blood Pressure Machine	Manometer / Sphygmomanometer
German measles	rubella

Learning the context of the terminology

English	Japanese
"Closed"	"準備中"
Acute Mountain Sickness	"山酔い"
Sea Sickness	"船酔い"
Motion Sickness	"乗り物酔い"
High Altitude Illness	"高山病"

Medical interview protocol

1. Chief complaint
2. History of present illness
3. Review of systems
4. Past medical history
5. Past surgical history
6. Family history
7. Social history
8. Medications
9. Allergies
10. Physical examination

Recommendation of materials for learning health care terminology

Vocabulary

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Medical Interview Protocol

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2 - e. Integrated Interpreting Skills

Pre-Session Skills

- State that they will maintain the confidentiality of the session
- Inform the parties of the elements necessary for a smoothly interpreted session, including
 1. The requirement for interpreters to interpret everything
 2. The importance of direct communication
 3. The need to pause for interpreting
 4. The need to intervene for clarification

In-Session Skills

- Position the parties to encourage direct communication
- Remind the parties to communicate directly to each other
- Use the first person ("I") as the standard form of interpreting to enhance direct communication
- Manage the smooth flow of communication
- Intervene for clarification when interpreters do not fully understand the terminology or message

Post-Session Skills

- Inquire about any questions or concerns the parties may have for each other
- Facilitate the scheduling of follow-up appointments
- Document the provision of interpreting services, as required by each organization's policies
- Debrief providers or the interpreter's supervisor, when appropriate, about concerns arising from the session

Health & Well-Being of the Interpreter

- Acknowledging that healthcare interpreting is hard work
- Understanding patient's responses to various situations
- Understanding the provider's minds
- Working as a team
- Offering workshops

2 - f. Simple Translating Skills

- Medical documents
- Questionnaires
- Registration forms
- Brochures
- Patient education materials
- Invoices
- Appointment cards
- Prescription labels
- Discharge instructions

3. Follow-Up Questions

- What are the issues in the certification of health care interpreters in Japan?
- What is the purpose of certification? : Advantages and disadvantages of certification
- Certification test: Problems to be solved
- Suggested Roles of MITA
 1. Assuring a uniform basic level in the health care terminology & common phrases
 2. Promoting standard training programs
 3. Evaluation of the trainers' ability

Thank you very much for your attention!

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Profile

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Memberships

The National Council on Interpreting in Health Care
Japan Society for Medical English Education
Japanese Society of Travel Medicine
Medical Interpreters & Translators Association

医師の仕事の他に医療英語、医学英語、医療通訳などといったテーマでこんなこともしています。

「Living Healthy in Asahikawa」

旭川市国際交流委員会が毎月発行する英語情報紙「Asahikawa Info」に掲載している健康、医療に関するコラム(英語)です。

公共の出版物ですので、コラムの内容も幅広い読者を想定したものにしています。「カテキン」「鬱病」など日本で注目される医療知識から、地域独自の医療情報や、「二日酔い対策」、「日焼け対策」、「腰痛対策」といった日々の生活で活かせる健康知識等、幅広いテーマで書いています。

<http://www.city.asahikawa.hokkaido.jp/files/kokusaikouryu/ashkwinfo/column.htm>

「Dr. Oshimi's Healthy Lifestyle」

札幌で発行されている多言語情報誌「Xene」に出稿しているコラム(英語)です。

札幌在住の若い外国人(主に英語圏出身)の方に向けた医療情報の提供が目的です。「STD の知識」や「日本での医療機関へのかかり方」などを紹介しています。

Xene Website: <http://www.xene.net/>

「Dr. Taka のすぐに使えて役に立つ Medical いんぐりっしゅ」

カナダ・バンクーバーに、「Oops!」という現地在住日本人向けの情報誌(日本語)があります。「Medical いんぐりっしゅ」はこの雑誌の下旬号に毎月出稿しているコラム(日本語)です。

「楽しくてわかりやすい」をコンセプトに、身体に関係する英語や医療に関する英語を紹介しています。主な読者層である若い人達が「カナダでの日常生活の中で遭遇しやすい」、そんな医療英語をその内容まで理解してもらえるように心がけています。

Oops! Website: <http://www.oopsweb.com/>

「East Wind Medicare: Medical Interpreter Training Course Textbook」

ニュージーランド、オークランドで旅行保険を通じた医療通訳サービスを行っている East Wind Medicare という会社があります。そこで「医療通訳養成講座」を2ヶ月(そのうち1ヶ月はインターン)の期間で行っているのですが、そこで用いるテキスト(診療英会話)の編集を担当させていただきました。

今日のテーマに関することなどでご質問、ご意見等がありましたら、お気軽にメールして下さい。

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Living Healthy in Asahikawa "Getting Over Your Hangover"

You've just opened your eyes to find yourself crumpled into a collapsed mess. Your mind gradually manages to reconstruct some memories of the previous night's activities. Then you feel like that you're in the worst part of hell.

Now your understanding of what a hangover is, really comes in handy. This is when you make a false promise to yourself. "I'll NEVER drink again!"

So you want to enjoy drinking without the side effects the next morning, right? Join the club! In this month's issue, we provide you with some useful tips for preventing or reducing the dreaded symptoms of a hangover!

What is a hangover?

A nasty hangover is thought to be Mother Nature's way of punishing you and to prevent you from drinking in the future; "I told you, Mr. Stupid. Now you're gonna pay."

Actually, the main cause of your hangover symptoms is not so much the alcohol itself, but the by-products of alcohol, and especially one nasty chemical critter by the name of acetaldehyde. As the liver breaks it down, alcohol changes into acetaldehyde, which causes flu-like symptoms, such as headache, nausea, or feeling tired. On top of this, the hangover is also a result of dehydration, alterations in endocrine function, and the increased production of thromboxanes.

In addition to these factors, your condition influences your symptoms. With dehydration, an empty stomach, lack of sleep, stress, and physical activity while drinking, you have a greater likelihood of developing a hangover.

Preparing for the night out

Now that you know how alcohol affects you and what factors can aggravate your hangover. It is time to figure out how to prevent the hangover. To begin with, you should prepare yourself before you even step out the door, by following these tips.

Don't drink on an empty stomach

The reason that food is so important is because it'll sop up the alcohol so that it doesn't all go directly into the bloodstream. In addition to this, the stomach lining is too sensitive to the alcohol when it is not mixed with food. So drinking milk or having fatty food is highly recommended.

Hydrate your body

Most people know that alcohol acts as a diuretic. Be sure to drink water or other fluids such as a fruit juice, or a sport drink to prevent dehydration.

So the lowdown is; eat, drink water/juice, and you'll be merry in the morning!

While you're drinking

OK, you've loaded up with food and water. Now you can start drinking. But even while you're choosing your drinks, you can lessen the bad effects of the alcohol.

Avoid darker drinks

Darker drinks, like red wine, bourbon, scotch, and brandy have more congeners than lighter drinks, such as white wine, vodka, and gin. The congeners are created during the fermentation process, and they contribute to a brutal hangover. You should also keep in mind that the cheaper the dark drink is, the more congeners it will contain. From my personal experience, I can say that the cheap-red-wine hangover is the WORST! So be especially careful with cheap red wine.

Don't mix different types of drinks

This is a general rule that everyone knows. But the reason most people believe may be wrong. The real reason why you should avoid mixing your drinks is that naturally you tend to drink more when mixing. Of course it is obvious that you get more drunk when you drink more.

Alternate your alcoholic drink with a fruit juice

This is a measure to hydrate your body. Alcohol is diuretic, so you need to re-hydrate your body with water or juice. For this purpose, a fruit juice is especially good, as it contains sugar and vitamins, which help the liver work. If you're afraid that it makes you look like a bit of a lightweight, just say it is a screwdriver. They'll probably be too drunk to notice anyway.

When you get home

Ok, you've had your fun, and managed to get back to your place. But wait! Don't go to bed right away. Check the following tips, and you'll thank your drunken self the next morning.

Have a pee

That'll save you at least one nocturnal trip to the bathroom.

Have a drink and no, not another beer!

Having emptied your bladder, refill your body. This might be unpleasant, but it must be done. Drinks that contain electrolytes will keep you hydrated.

Don't have a painkiller

Some people pop pills to prevent headaches the next morning. But this is an absolutely terrible idea. The painkillers upset your stomach, and also can be a burden on your liver. It won't be too late to have the painkillers if you wake up with a headache after all.

In the morning

You're still alive. That means you didn't choke on your own vomit. Well done. Here's how to survive the rest of the morning.

Take a rest

If you have drunk a lot, your liver might be still working to break down the acetaldehyde. During this detoxification process, you need to lie down to help the liver work better.

No more alcohol

Some people drink again to reduce the headache, but this makes the situation worse. They have just started to be drunk again! Never drink more in the morning!

Beware of coffee

Many people drink coffee as an eye opener. But be aware that coffee also has a diuretic effect, and it may worsen the fluid imbalance in your body. So don't forget to drink other fluids.

There are many other home remedies all over the world, but the best cure, I can say, is, as always "moderation". Enjoy your drinks. Cheers!

Asahikawa Info (March 2004)

Dr. Oshimi's Healthy Lifestyle "Chlamydia-free? Are you *sure*?"

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), formally called "venereal diseases," are spread through sex with an infected person. It is not uncommon for sexually active people to become infected with an STD.

Chlamydia is the most frequently reported STD, and experts estimate that 138,000 men and 819,000 women in Japan are infected with this disease.

What is Chlamydia?

Genital Chlamydia is an infection of the lining of the cervix and urethra that is passed on during sexual intercourse. Caused by the *Chlamydia Trachomatis* bacterium, the disease is easily spread because it's often asymptomatic and may be unknowingly transmitted. In fact, as many as 80% of infected women and 50% of infected men show no symptoms. This is one reason why so many women have the infection. One study has reported that one woman in sixteen aged between 20- 24 is infected.

How do you get it?

Chlamydia can be spread through any unprotected sexual contact (i.e., sex without a condom), including vaginal, oral, and anal sex. A pregnant woman can give the bacteria to her child during childbirth, causing eye infection, blindness, or pneumonia.

How do you know whether you've got it?

It's not easy to tell if you're infected, since symptoms are not always apparent. When they do occur, they usually include the following.

<i>For women</i>	<i>For men</i>
Pain during intercourse	Pain when urinating
Pain when urinating	Discharge from the penis
Lower abdominal pain with fever	Pain and swelling around the testicles
Bleeding between periods	
Painful periods	
Itching or burning in or around the vagina	

How is it diagnosed?

If you think you might be infected, you should see a healthcare professional as soon as possible. In Japan, patients consult directly with specialists. For any STD, women should go to a hospital's or clinic's gynecology department (*fujin-ka*), and men to the urology department (*hinyouki-ka*).

The specialist uses several diagnostic tests for Chlamydia. The most reliable are laboratory tests. Usually, the doctor swabs a sample from the vagina or penis and sends it to the lab for bacterial analysis. Recently, new tests that use urine samples to identify the presence of the bacteria have become available. These don't require a pelvic exam or swabbing of the penis, so don't hesitate to seek a specialist's help.

How is it treated?

- Your doctor will probably prescribe an antibiotic. The following points are very important for treatment.
- Complete the full course of medication, regardless of when the symptoms disappear.
 - If the symptoms don't disappear within one week after finishing the medicine, see your doctor again.
 - Tell any partners to get tested and treated to prevent re-infection and further spread.

What can happen if it's not treated?

For women, the infection can lead to Pelvic Inflammatory Disease, a serious infection that can cause scarring of the fallopian tubes. This can block the tubes and prevent fertilization. It can also increase the risk of ectopic pregnancy. The result can be miscarriage and sometimes the death of the mother. A baby who is exposed to the *Chlamydia* bacteria during delivery may develop eye infection or pneumonia. It's recommended that all pregnant women be tested for Chlamydia. Also, women infected with Chlamydia have three to five times the risk of being infected with HIV, if exposed.

For men, the infection can lead to inflammation of the urethra, epididymitis, and proctitis.

How do you prevent infection?

Reduce the risk by using condoms correctly every time. Limiting your number of sexual partners reduces your chances of infection. The more partners you have, the more likely you are to catch an STD.

If you're infected but have no symptoms, you may pass Chlamydia on to a partner without knowing it. Healthcare professionals recommend that anyone who has more than one sex partner, especially women under age 25, be tested for Chlamydia regularly, even if they have no symptoms.

Both men and women should take responsibility to alert current and previous partners when they become aware that they've been infected. Let's be honest with our partners and protect them and ourselves against the spread of disease so that we can all live long healthy lives.

Xene (November 2004)