

Migrants' English Language Proficiency and Health care Access; A Qualitative Study in South Wales United Kingdom

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Abstract : The aim of this research study is to explore the perspectives of migrants and interpreters from diverse backgrounds on language barriers, their English language proficiency and access to health care facilities. A qualitative research methodology was used including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Data was collected from 20 migrants who have difficulty conversing in the English language and 12 interpreters including family members and friends who provide translation services as part of accessing health care. The findings seek to address three key research questions: how language is a barrier for non-national language speakers to access the health care facilities, what is the impact of various socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds on health compliance, and what is the role of interpreters in providing access to, usage of, and satisfaction with health-care facilities. The most crucial component of providing care was found to be effective communication between patient and health care professionals. Language barrier was the major concern for healthcare professionals in providing and for migrants in accessing sufficient, suitable, and productive health care facilities. Language and sociocultural background play a significant role in health compliance as this research reported; respondents believe that patients who interact with the doctors who have same sociocultural and linguistic background benefit from receiving better medical care than those who do not. Language limitations and the socio-cultural gap make it difficult for patients and medical staff to communicate clearly with one another, which has a negative effect on quality of care and patient satisfaction. The use of qualified interpreters was found to be beneficial but there were also drawbacks such as accessibility and availability of them in a timely manner for patient needs. The findings of this research can help health care workers and policy makers working to improve health care delivery system and to create appropriate strategies to overcome this challenge.

Keywords : migration, migrants, language barrier, healthcare access

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