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Understanding Resident Perception and Usage of Interpreter Services in the Pediatric Inpatient Unit of a Municipal Hospital in New York City: A Needs Assessment

Background:Interpreter services(IS) play a crucial role in patient care.Resident physicians interact closely with patients and caregivers in the pediatric inpatient setting.We sought to understand the residents' perception and utilization of IS for Limited English Proficiency(LEP) patients and caregivers in the inpatient setting.

Objective:Our aim is to conduct a needs assessment in a pediatric residency program on perceptions and usage of IS.

Design/Method:Pediatric residents at a large municipal hospital completed an online survey to assess their perceptions of the available IS in the inpatient setting wherein 10% of patients are LEP and require IS.Questions identified residents' perception on (1) quality of care received by LEP patients,and (2)barriers to utilization and documentation of IS.Survey questions were developed with the guidance of qualitative experts and informed by existing literature.Surveys were disseminated through an online platform with a priori defined periodic reminders for completion.Results were described and analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

Results:We received a 42% response rate.Of note, all respondents considered IS as an important part of patient care.A majority of respondents(94%) interact with LEP patients once a week or more frequently.However,only 42% of respondents 'always' document interpreter use.58% of respondents noted the likely presence of unequal care between LEP and English-proficient patients.The primary barriers to utilization of IS included long connection times and limited number of devices to access interpreters.We noted a potential gap in the residents' awareness of the different IS connection methods— a factor that may limit their utilization of available services.

Conclusion:Resident physicians largely perceive IS to be important for patient care.But the utilization and documentation of this service for LEP patients is limited by several factors.