

Language barriers in Swiss hospitals

- 40% of the people living in Switzerland have a migration background (Federal Statistics Office, 2024)
- 74% of the nurses in hospitals encounter often or daily patients with whom they cannot communicate in German (Dibrani & Vukadin, 2023)
- 73% of the midwives have often or sometimes contact with allophone patients (Laukart & Grilli, 2021)
- 36% of the family doctors see at least once per week a patient who does not speak the official language sufficiently well (Jaeger et al., 2019)

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Communication challenges

« The main problem is that we cannot understand each other. That means that I cannot respond to the needs of the patient and / or they do not understand their analyses which leads to problems during nursing.»

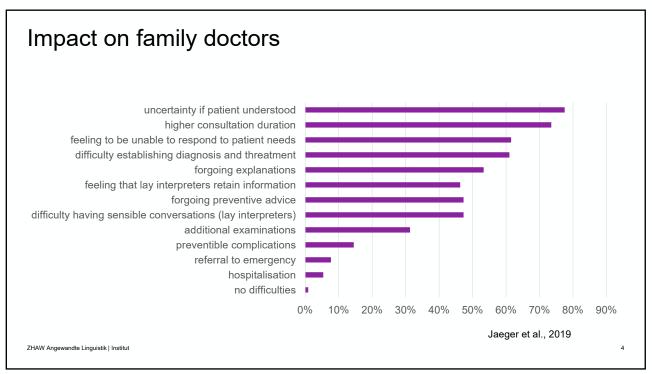
Dibrani & Vukadin, 2021; response no. 71

- Difficulties to communicate (25)
- Difficulties assessing symptoms or taking history (14)
- Important information is not understood (10)
- Healthcare professional can't respond to patient's needs (9)
- Misunderstandings (8)
- Feeling of uncertainty (5)
- Reduced communication (4)
- Time-consuming (4)
- Patient can't express their needs (4)
- Lack of trust (2)
- Support of others necessary (1)

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Overcoming language barriers

(summarizing AMIT, Laukart & Grilli, 2021, Grond, 2022; Lehr & Gieshoff, 2022 und Jaeger et al, 2019)

Main communication strategies

- Machine translation
- •Relatives as lay interpreters
- •Nonverbal communication / gestures
- > Qualified interpreters are called only rarely

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relatives

over-the-phone_interpreting

medical_lstaff

pictures

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Challenges when using translation apps

«I think you need some intellectual skills to use these tools because you need to know how to formulate a sentence in different ways and not everybody is able to that.»

(Lehr & Gieshoff, 2022; I2, 07:21)

Mentioned by at least 3 participants:

- Risk of mistranslations (8)
- Nuances are lost (4)
- Tedious and time-consuming (4)
- Lack of data protection (3)
- Translation apps as «communicative barrier»
 (3)
- Requires cognitive skills (3)

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Machine translation vs. (qualified) interpreters

Machine translation

- Well-being, simple medical questions (65:4)
- Information on up-coming treatment or nursing activities (30:10)
- Appointments and every-day communication (17:4)

No trend / unclear

- Admission and discharge, ward round (22:34)
- Anamnesis and consultation for simple cases (18:32)
- Patient education (8:14)
- Unclear (18:54)

(qualified) interpreters

- Emergency, no alternative (8:34)
- Complex case and consent (7:140)
- Long and complex conversations (0:40)
- Meetings with relatives (0:66)

Categories mentioned by > 20 respondents Source: Grond, 2022

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Decision tree Schritt 1: Bestimmen Sie den Situationstyp Situation Typ I Situation Typ II Situation Typ III Situation absehbar oder schematisch Keine komplexe Terminologie Situation weniger absehbar oder vertraut Sprachlich, aber nicht inhaltlich komplexer Situation inhaltlich oder emotional komplex Langfristige Compliance erforderlich Keine oder geringfügige Konsequenzen für Patientinnen im Fall von Missverständnissen Schwerwiegende emotionale und/oder gesundheitliche Folgen im Fall von Missverständnissen. Leichte emotionale, aber keine gesundheitlichen Folgen im Fall von Missverständnissen. Schritt 2: Prüfen Sie die folgenden Punkte ✓ Namen und sensible Informationen ✓ Termin planbar ✓ Der Termin ist planbar Termin kürzer als 30 Minuten geräuscharme Umgebung Kein zwingender visueller Kontakt nötig ✓ Gerät kann abgelegt oder in der Hand gehalten werden geräuscharme Umgebung Schritt 3: Empfehlung Maschinelle Übersetzung Telefon- oder Videodolmets chen Dolmets chen vor Ort Lehr & Gieshoff, 2022 ZHAW Angewandte Linguistik I Institut

DigiLinguo: Overcoming language barriers in public institutions

Test track

Testing of digital translation tools

Meet-ups

Stakeholder events and networking

Online-training platform for interpreters and trainers
Teaching material



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Thank you for your attention!



More about DigiLinguo



More about the decision tree