Language Brokering, Limited English, and Considerations for Familial Inclusion

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Aims:

1. Understand the term "Language Brokering" and its implications for clinical trials
2. Consider how to ethically include family members, especially children, while observing HIPAA.
3. Suggestions for working with families of patients with Limited English Proficiency.

Limited English Proficiency: Context in Clinical Trials

- Adults between 18-64 with Limited English Proficiency are significantly more likely to lack a source of care and are often overdue for basic services (preventative checks, blood pressure checks, and colorectal cancer screening) (Ramirez et al 2023).
    - Consistently have worse access to care if the adult has Limited English Proficiency.
- As oncological health professionals, we have limited control over system-level interventions: healthcare insurance coverage expansion, language services, better provider cultural competence training, medical workforce diversity (Gössling *et al* 2023).
- How can we maximize our impact in areas we have influence over?

Language Brokering

- What is it?
    - Language Brokering is sometimes considered a "tri" process due to the patient, doctor, and language broker sharing a space. The language broker acts as an interpreter between two people but they are not trained interpreters. Commonly, the

individual brokering is a friend or family member, sometimes a child, and the doctor is in a position of power (Iqbal and Crafter 2023).

- This can become problematic because:
  - Being bilingual does not mean someone is qualified to interpret.
  - Power imbalances may affect communication and decision-making.
  - Young people may use delay tactics as a strategy to manage conflicts.
  - Sensitivity of the topic and a lack of necessary medical knowledge can create additional challenges.
- Implications of Clinical Trials (George et al 2014)
  - Patient diversity in clinical trials ensures the generalizability of studies, equity of healthcare, and allows analysis by race and ethnicity.
  - Improper knowledge of culture can result in ineffective communication strategies at all stages of recruitment for clinical trials (recruitment, enrollment, and retention).
  - Failure to facilitate culturally sensitive and meaningful discussions regarding proper informed consent.
  - 19% of the population in the USA is Latino, but less than 7% partake in clinical trials and 2% in biobanking (Ramirez and Chalela 2022).
  - Issues of patient-physician communication barriers play a major role.

Ethical Family Inclusion with HIPAA

- *Remember that ethnic groups are heterogeneous*
  - Check out the SWOG Fall 2022 Take Action Symposium video for some information on how varied Spanish-speaking populations in the US are!
- These should be patient-led conversations.
- Some cultures may include family members when making medical decisions, but this can be tricky.

  - Consider: if the person interpreting is a family member, try to get a third-party interpreter.
  - Suggestion for institution policy: no friends or family members can interpret for a patient to avoid conflict of interest
    - Tip: Children should not serve as interpreters or witnesses to informed consent.
    - Tip: Allow the patient to take the informed consent home to review prior to signing it. This would allow them to speak with their family about the study and their decision IF they choose. This ensures the patient is in control of how much they wish to share with family members.
- Sample Case Study:
  - A 32-year-old Hispanic man and his 12-year-old daughter enter the clinic. He does not speak English, but his daughter does. The patient is returning to the office because he is getting results back from his prostate biopsy. The biopsy was positive for cancer cells within the tissue. The doctor is monolingual and cannot speak Spanish. The daughter says she came to interpret. **How could this be managed?**
- Considerations related to language brokers in adult visits
  - Availability of interpreters limited in some languages
  - Children:
    - Undue emotional burden, accuracy of information, and the confidentiality of information.
    - Reversal of the child-parent roles and a general loss of childhood (Narchal and Hembrow 2024).
    - Children should be reassured the interpreter is an aid and does not require them to translate critical medical information.
  - Confidentiality: Patient control of medical information to be shared with family
  - Ensure full consent is understood by the patient.

Resources for further reading:

1. George S, Duran N, and Norris K (2014). A Systematic Review of Barriers and Facilitators to Minority Research Participation Among African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders. *AJPH* . Vol. 104, Issue 2. Available from: https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2013.301706.

2. Ramirez N, Shi K, Yabroff KR, Han X, Fedewa SA, and Nogueira LM (2023). Access to Care Among Adults with Limited English Proficiency. *J Gen Intern Med*; 38(3):592–9. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-022-07690-3.

3. Iqbal H, Crafter S. (2023) Child Language Brokering in Healthcare: Exploring the Intersection of Power and Age in Mediation Practices. *J Child Fam Stud*. 32(2):586–97. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-022-02376-0.

4. Gössling G, Rebelatto TF, Villarreal-Garza C, *et al* (2023). Current Scenario of Clinical Cancer Research in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Curr Oncol*. 30(1):653–62. Available from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9858272/.

5. Ramirez AG and Chalela P (2022). Equitable Representation of Latinos in Clinical Research Is Needed to Achieve Health Equity in Cancer Care. *JCO Oncol Pract*. 18(5):e797–804. Available from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10476724/.

6. Narchal R and Hembrow, R. (2024). Hidden care: a qualitative exploration of the roles and responsibilities of language brokers. *International journal of qualitative studies on health and well-being*. *19*(1). Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2024.2371536.

7. American Heart Association (2024). Lo que la gente hispana, y todas las personas en general, deben saber sobre los ensayos clínicos. Available from: https://www.heart.org/en/news/2024/01/22/lo-que-la-gente-hispana-y-todas-las-personas-en-general-deben-saber-sobre-los-ensayos-clinicos.

8. SWOG Fall 2022 Hybrid Group Meeting (2022). Take Action Symposium. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGhViqMtM3U.