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# ICT EVALUATION REPORT: Interpretation

**KW4 OHT ICT**

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# BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

## PURPOSE

*This report was developed as a supplement to a larger process evaluation of the KW4 OHT Refugee Health Integrated Care Team (hereafter ICT) program.*

*The goal of the ICT is to help refugee patients from the Centre for Family Medicine (CFFM) and Sanctuary, transition to permanent Primary Care Providers (PCPs) in the region. Throughout this evaluation, access to interpretation and the use of interpretation services by both ICT team members and the Primary Care Providers (PCPs) emerged as a critical element of the program.*

*This topic was so important that the evaluation team decided to create this separate report to describe in greater detail how interpretation services are used in the context of ICT and in healthcare settings beyond the ICT.*

## BACKGROUND

*The Kw4 OHT Integrated Care Team for Refugees program procured a HIPPA-compliant virtual interpretation service to support the program, and this was used both by ICT staff, and was made available to the PCP clinics to which the refugee patients were discharged.*

## METHODOLOGY

*The research team conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 ICT team members In Fall of 2022 and 8 ICT patients. Along with questions related to the implementation of the larger ICT program, ICT team members were asked about their experience with the virtual interpretation service, and interpretation services in general.*

*Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Deductive coding, based on the interview questions, was used to identify initial codes, which were then grouped into themes. Themes were reviewed and refined as necessary by the evaluation team members to ensure they provide a reasonable representation of the data.*

# WHAT ARE STAFF SAYING ABOUT THE VIRTUAL INTERPRETATION SERVICE?

## EASY & ANONYMOUS

- " ...In like five minutes how simple it is to push a button... pick the language ...pick the gender... then how quickly they came on and how professional they are... There is that anonymity, because they're not from this region... The person who's getting this information interpret it doesn't have to worry that they're from their community and that they can tell people what they've been talking about."

## GENERALLY LIKED & ACCEPTED

- "The Refugee Health Clinic and Sanctuary tend to enjoy it quite a bit... They brought [the virtual service] to me and were excitedly showing off... Some doctors have been used to using [a different system] and have... said, I'm gonna keep doing that...I think that there's been some limitations. [For example,] there's not a female Rohingya interpreter on Voyce."

## AVAILABILITY, SKILLED INTERPRETERS & TECH SUPPORT

- "...It's 24/7... They have people working from everywhere in the world... They interpret meaning for meaning not word for word... avoids so much miscommunication... They don't have a time limit that they have to be on and you never feel rushed... They're very kind, very respectful, very professional... I have to ask the interpreter how long we were on the phone... For documentation purposes... They're on like a direct communication basis... Like they're literally on your phone... usually within less than 30 seconds. A huge sell for doctors, right, too."

## NO APPOINTMENT REQUIRED

- "I think it's a pretty- very helpful tool. It really helped us a lot when we need interpretation... you don't have to book appointments."

## NOT A PROBLEM IF THERE ARE "NO SHOWS"

- "Yeah, actually, that's why it is easier because you don't have to cancel the appointment if the client didn't come and the interpreter came or didn't come. When you need it, you use it."

# WHY DO STAFF THINK INTERPRETATION IS IMPORTANT?

It is well known and widely established that medical interpretation is essential for communication and to support equitable access to care, there is still very limited uptake and institutional support for interpretation, particularly in clinics. Thus, we thought it was worthwhile to convey what our participants told us about the importance of providing interpretation services.

- *"You need interpretation. Because otherwise people are falling through the gaps. If every time the growing Somali and Rohingya population need to access primary care, they have to go to the hospital, those are going to bog down those systems... Every dollar is going to be worth it ...If that's the only place where they will get interpretation, then that's what people are going to do... this is a far too common story."*
- *"I think about [the virtual interpretation service] as a tool. The same way I would think about a hearing aid, or glasses. That's a human right. We have to make you come back to a day that we have an interpreter... we don't have a clue what you need because no one could communicate with you. In that moment, you were ready to receive help. And that takes huge courage, and we can't give it to you. But if I pick up my phone... you are able to talk about what you need, what you're looking for. As service providers, we have an obligation to do that."*
- *"We have a whole group of youth who are like, I do not want to go to my dad's doctor's appointment and hear about his prostate and translate. And doctors should know that. They should know that that young woman does not want to be translating for her dad... That's not what we should be doing. That's not quality care. And that's not respectful care. And it really puts people in compromising situations."*
- *"No one should have to call a neighbour who they barely know, to help them with interpretation when they're having a miscarriage. That is an absolute tragedy of the system, and any amount of money we can put into that to prevent that."*
- *"It can be embarrassing, and stressful, to be engaging, and trying to get an appointment when you have limited language."*
- *"Having an interpreter tells them that you care... enough to want to know what's going on. Otherwise, it's like they don't matter... So creating that sense of belonging, and welcoming, inclusive environment."*

# WHY IS INTERPRETATION IMPORTANT FOR ICT PATIENTS?

**NOTE : MANY PATIENTS DID NOT COMMENT ON THE VIRTUAL INTERPRETATION SERVICE SPECIFICALLY, BUT RATHER DISCUSSED THE IMPORTANCE OF ANY TYPE/MODE of INTERPRETATION**

## **EASIER TO ADJUST TO A NEW LIFE AND NEW SYSTEM**

- *"I'd like to, you know, I'd like to be there an interpreter the whole time, to call the interpreter, and to help us anytime we want. Because, you know, we're still here new in Canada. You know? Like language barrier, it's very hard for us."*
- *"I would definitely wish that there are interpreters for newcomers. Well, particularly when it comes to the first year."*
- *"It is really important because there's so many people who are coming into the country with their families and their children, and they do not speak the language. It would be really hard for them to be able to access medical services and even other services... and...adjust to the country."*

## **MAKES IT NOT NECESSARY TO RELY ON FAMILY MEMBERS TRANSLATING**

- *"If my children are with me, they help interpret and if they are not, they call into an interpreter who assists."*
- *"If I don't go to the doctor with my father or my mother, my father or my mother cannot communicate with the doctor...I always have to be by their side wherever they are going to, anywhere, because I try to communicate with with the little language that they do have, with my broken English."*
- *"Frankly, yes, sometimes [it is difficult to communicate with the doctor if I go alone]."*

# STAFF THOUGHTS ON IN-PERSON VS. VIRTUAL INTERPRETATION

We asked ICT staff members when they thought it was appropriate to use a virtual interpretation service, or to employ the services of in-person interpretation. Following is a short list of their reflections:

## When is it more appropriate to use a virtual interpretation service?

- When a required dialect is not available locally/difficult to schedule
- In communities where patients and in-person interpreters may know each other
- When you need instant interpretation (walk-ins)
- During COVID-19/outbreaks/pandemics, to allow physical distancing
- When having a trained medical interpreter is imperative

## When is it more appropriate to use in-person interpretation services?

- Public health groups where multiple languages need to be translated simultaneously
- When a complex or frail patient is seeing different healthcare practitioners/clinics - having a consistent interpreter would support continuity of care and the transfer of information
- When important forms need to be filled out. Easier to do sitting next to the patient

# PATIENT THOUGHTS ON IN-PERSON VS. VIRTUAL INTERPRETATION

We also asked patients for their preferences for in-person translation as opposed to virtual interpretation services. Many said they did not prefer one over the other, but there was a notable portion that said they preferred an interpreter to be present in person. Following is a general summary of their answers.

## Justification for preferring an in-person interpreter

- They are better able to convey the information the patient wants
- *"they are clearer when it comes to delivering ideas."*
- *"...if the interpreter is in-person, then my father and my mother...can easily understand and...hear. And...they can also talk directly to the...interpreter [and] help him to convey the information to the doctor.."*

## Justification for not having a preference

- Availability of an interpreter is more important than its mode of communication
- *"The most important thing is that we are understanding one another."*
- *"...as long as the interpreter is there and is able to be able to communicate they're both just the same."*