

Interpreter and Other Communication Services

It is important for Doctor's to understand their patients and for patients' to understand the information the Doctor is providing. If a patient of the practice does not speak the primary language of the Doctor or has a communication impairment, then the use of interpreter and other communication services will need to be considered.

RACGP Standards

- 1.2.3A** *Our clinical team can describe how they communicate with patients who do not speak the primary language of our staff or who have a communication impairment.*
- 1.2.3B** *Our practice has a list of contact details for interpreter and other communication services including the Translating and Interpreter Service.*

Assessment methods

- Interviews with GPs and practice staff

Practice GPs and staff will be able to describe the way in which they communicate with patients who do not speak the primary language of the Doctors or who have a communication impairment.

- Document review of contact numbers for interpreter and other communication services.

Meeting the standards

Practices may never experience the need for these services, however they need to know that they exist and how to access them. The Practice will have available a list of contact numbers for interpreter and other communication services.

It is acceptable to use a relative or friend as an interpreter, provided that it is the expressed wish of the patient and the problem is minor. The use of children as interpreters is not encouraged at any time except in emergency situations. When interpreter services are needed it is useful to consider whether relatives and friends will put their own interpretation into translations. Where possible, Practices should use appropriately qualified interpreters.

Best practice:

- All staff members are familiar with the process for using interpreter and other communication services.
- Clinical and administrative staff are familiar with languages commonly used by practice patients.