



CRCF Illuminates Research **No. 5**

Healthcare Service Provision With an Interpreter in the Context of a Health Crisis
A Scoping Review

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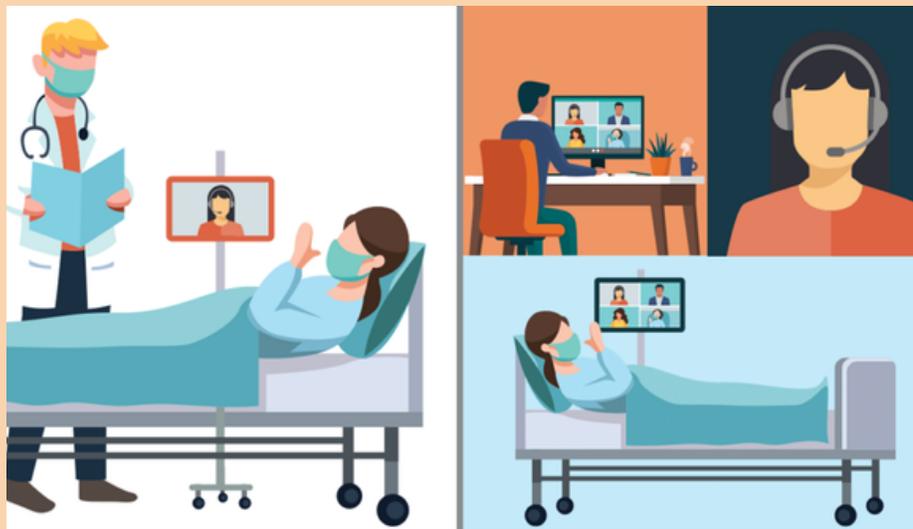
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What is the social issue?

A large proportion of the immigrant population speak neither French nor English when they arrive in Quebec. The issue of communication and the language barrier for these people are determinants of the delivery of health and social services. Although the literature is abundant on interpretation in health and social services, few or no studies have focused on remote interpretation and interpretation in the context of a health crisis, and none in Quebec. Many issues (e.g., confidentiality, access to computers and Internet, etc.) would affect service accessibility for this population. The project aimed to identify best practices developed to maintain service quality and efficiency in the context of a health crisis.

What are we doing?

The team conducted a scoping review to explore the existing literature on the issues faced by health and social service providers regarding remote interpretation and interpretation in times of crisis. Twenty-eight publications were ultimately included in a qualitative synthesis of the literature. The synthesis explored the crisis context, parameters for working with an interpreter, interpretation modalities in times of crisis, and the importance of training interpreters and providers.



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WHAT DID THE LITERATURE TELL US?

- Emotions can sometimes hinder the interpretation process and, thus, create barriers to communication.
- Lack of experience in emergency contexts led to more stress for some interpreters.
- Some crisis environments may be unsafe depending on the nature of the crisis
- There are more challenges to accessing an interpreter than in non-crisis contexts.

Context of crisis



Importance of interpreters in time of crisis

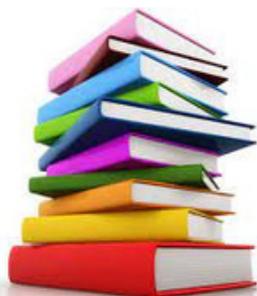
- Most patients, in crisis context, are eager to thank interpreters for facilitating communication with medical teams (doctors, nurses, etc.).
- Intercultural mediation appears to influence positively the patients' experience.
- The appreciation of interpreters by health professionals is mixed and depends largely on the conditions of interpretation (i.e., availability of the interpreter, the interpretation environment).

Interpretation modalities

During crises, three interpretation modalities are possible:

- Face-to-face interpretation.
- Remote interpretation using computer-based tools.
- Remote interpretation using telephone and videoconference.

Training



- Service providers' training to work with interpreters as well as joint training sessions for providers and interpreters seem to improve the provision of health and social services.
- Training to familiarize providers and interpreters with different kinds of crisis situations is necessary.
- Training interpreters in healthcare settings on basic medical needs and medical terminology seems to assist with the provision of services.

OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE LITERATURE

This scoping review has made it possible to map the literature on the subject of intervention in the presence of an interpreter in times of crisis and to identify promising practices and conditions for success in those settings.

The larger research project of which this Scoping Review is part aims to document the intervention with interpreters with allophone service users during the COVID-19 pandemic in Quebec. Eleven institutions within the health and social services network as well as several groups and community organizations participated in the study. More than 500 clinicians and 100 interpreters responded to an online questionnaire, thus enriching the scoping review results.