

The importance of gaining culturally and linguistically diverse background consumer feedback to inform culturally responsive health care

The purpose of culturally and linguistically diverse background (CALDB) consumer feedback was to better understand the language, cultural and spiritual needs and expectations of CALDB consumers and (from a consumer's perspective) the extent to which Mater Health Services responds to these needs.

This information was to be used to inform:

1. strategies to increase the cultural responsiveness of Mater at both a structural (e.g. use of interpreters) and clinical (e.g. interaction between health care provider and patient) level
2. methods of providing health information
3. appropriate client feedback/complaint mechanisms.

Method

Data was collected between mid-November 2009 and mid-January 2010 using qualitative methods. The project employed a rapid and opportunistic approach to data collection. Qualitative interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted with participants from four CALDB populations: Vietnamese, Chinese, Sudanese and Greek. A total of five focus group discussions and 11 interviews were conducted.



The following topics guided the FGDs and interviews:

1. communication/interpreter services
2. relationship with hospital staff
3. cultural/spiritual needs
4. providing feedback.

The data was analysed using qualitative thematic and content analysis.

Table one: characteristics of participants in the cultural responsiveness consumer feedback project FGDs and interviews

Chinese		Greek		Sudanese		Vietnamese	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Interviews							
> 60 years	> 60 years 25 to 40 years	> 60 years	> 60 years (2)		25 to 40 years 41 to 60 years	41 to 60 years	41 to 60 years (2) 41 to 60 years
Focus Group Discussions							
41 to 60 years	25 to 40 years	41 to 60 years c	41 to 60 (5) c		18 to 24 years	41 to 60 years (3)	25 to 40 years (1)
> 60 years	41 to 60 years (2) > 60 years	> 60 years (2)	> 60 years (3)		25 to 40 years (3) 41 to 60 years (2)	> 60 years (2)	41 to 60 years (8) > 60 years (11)

Note: c=carers' group. Numbers behind ages represent numbers of participants in the age group participating.

Findings

There were several findings in the four topic areas covered by the qualitative data collection. Some of the key findings that provided substantive evidence to inform the interpreting and cultural responsiveness project include:

- provision of an interpreter was sporadic
- quality of interpreting was questionable at times
- Chinese and Vietnamese background patients were extremely satisfied with internal interpreters
- there is a need for translated information so patients can better understand their health condition
- there is a need for a ward communication tool to be used for patients on wards
- there were instances where consumers describe experiences of perceived discrimination
- there is a need to address the spiritual needs of consumers of other religions and for Mater to understand these needs (for example, of Buddhists, particularly at the time of death)
- none of the interviewees were aware of the complaints process at Mater, yet they all considered it important to be able to provide feedback.

Recommendations

The analysis of CALDB consumer feedback indicates that the following objectives be addressed as priorities towards the goal of improving the cultural responsiveness and interpreting service at Mater:

- increase CALDB consumers' and Mater staff knowledge of CALDB consumer's rights and responsibilities as clients of Mater, particularly in terms of interpreting availability and quality
- improve the quality of communication in all areas of Mater with a suite of strategies including staff training on CALDB relationship/communication skills and the increased use of bilingual tools
- improve Mater's response to the needs of non-Christian faiths, particularly in relation to death and dying
- increase CALDB consumers' and Mater staff knowledge of appropriate mechanisms for making a complaint to Mater
- continue to build on the relationships with CALDB communities developed through this project
- develop relationships with additional CALDB communities for (a) community education, (b) research to continually add to the body of knowledge gained from the current project and (c) continual monitoring of satisfaction (and feedback) regarding Mater.

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