Designing technology for allied health assessments of CALD patients

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Background:
Interpreters are required to aid communication between clinicians and non-English speaking patients, to ensure appropriate and timely care. Demand for interpreting services however, often exceeds supply leading to an inequality in care delivery for patients from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Western Health Speech Pathology and CSIRO, with support from the Victorian Government, have designed, deployed and are currently testing their solution to delayed initial Allied Health assessments with CALD patients. The *CALD Assist* iPad application (Freyne, et. al. 2015) was specifically designed to assist Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Dietitians, Podiatrists and Speech Pathologists in completing basic initial assessments and education with non-English speaking patients across the healthcare continuum. *CALD Assist* utilises key phrases translated into ten common languages using pictorial, written and voice-over prompts to assist completion of initial assessments when interpreters are unavailable.

Methods:
Staff focus groups were completed to identify technology and content requirements of the *CALD Assist* app. A five month impact analysis is currently being conducted incorporating staff satisfaction surveys, structured patient interviews and app usage through log analysis. Pre-trial data has been collected to determine impact on wait times for initial assessments.

Results:
Results indicated that 80% of staff reported that the phrase content of *CALD Assist* was appropriate, with 100% of staff reporting that the app was valuable and easy to use. 80% of participants would recommend it to a colleague. Patient feedback was challenging to obtain but indicated patients were satisfied that the app assisted with their communication.

Discussion:
The new *CALD Assist* iPad app has been deployed on acute wards at Western Health. While staff and patient satisfaction and efficacy of the app is currently being evaluated, *CALD Assist* has attracted significant interest from other disciplines and organisations and has the potential to be modified to meet the needs of other user groups in the future.

References:
Freyne, J., Pocock, C., Bradford, D., Harrap, K. & Brinkmann, S. (2015). Designing technology for assessment of CALD patients. Presentation at 23rd Health Information Conference (HIC 2015), Brisbane, August 2015.