

## Appendix: Interview Guide

### 1. Warm-up Questions

- a. Are you a staff physician or a resident?
- b. How many years have you been in (practice/residency)?
- c. In your opinion, do you feel able to communicate effectively in any languages other than English?
- d. In your clinical experience, which languages, other than English, have you most commonly encountered in your practice?

2. This might sound like a question that has an obvious answer, but I wonder if you could tell me how you usually come to realize that there could be differences in language between you and a patient?

Probes:

- How do you figure out whether the communication is ‘good enough to proceed’?
- How do you proceed differently than you would if you shared a language?
- How do you determine whether they are understanding what you are saying?
- How do you determine whether you are understanding what they are saying?

### 3. Scenarios:

A. Can you think back to a recent encounter when communication was difficult or impossible because you and the patient did **not** share a language? Please describe it and how you handled the situation.

Probes:

- What precisely mattered about not being able to speak the same language in this situation?
- What did you think?
- Are you aware of any strategies you use to try to facilitate the communication?
- Does that work?
- What happened as a result?
- How does that make you feel?
- What are your reflections on this situation now?
- Did you notice the patient doing anything to try to facilitate your interaction?

B. Can you now think back to a recent encounter when communication was difficult because you and the patient **share** a language but *not* at the same level of proficiency?

Probes:

- What was the most pressing issue or concerned you most about not being able to speak the same language in this situation?
- What did you think?

- Are you aware of any strategies you use to try to facilitate communication?
- Does that work?
- What happened as a result?
- What are your reflections on the situation now?
- Did you notice the patient doing anything to try to facilitate your interaction?

4. I am now going to give you a hypothetical scenario to read to yourself and then I'm going to get your perspective on it: "You are rounding on a busy Friday afternoon when you receive a consultation from the Emergency Department. The consult is a 65 year-old man with possible transient ischemic attacks (TIAs). All of his investigations, including blood work, ECGs and his head CT are unremarkable. He is accompanied by his wife; they both possess limited English skills. They can answer simply yes/no questions, but you find you are unable to complete your history and physical examination to your satisfaction because of the patient's limited English."

Probes:

- Describe how you would feel in this situation?
- What precisely mattered about not being able to speak the same language in this situation?
- How would you approach this situation?
- What might you do differently in this situation compared to one in which there are no problems with shared language?
- What would you do?
- What would you not do?
- How do you think this might compare with what really happens?

5. In general, do you think patients with whom communication is difficult might be cared for or approached differently? If so, how?

6. This next question is about "patient-centered care" which is considered an ideal for best practices in medicine. It is defined as health care that establishes a **partnership** among practitioner, patient and family (where appropriate) to do 2 things. First, to ensure that decisions respect patients' wants, needs and preferences, and second, to solicit patients' input on the education and support they need to participate in their care.

Probes:

- Do you think the ability to be patient-centered is influenced by language proficiency? If so, how?
- Do you think patient-centered care is realistic when language is an issue?

7. Let's turn to the issue of translation aids.

- Which aids, if any, have you used in practice?
- Which do you find most helpful?
- Which do you find least helpful?
- What are some advantages and/or disadvantages of each?

Probes:

- How do you go about getting translation aids?
  - Have you ever used means such as a patient's family member, or other hospital staff to assist you in translation? Why or why not?
  - How does the type of translation aid used affect your confidence in your medical interview and decision-making?
8. Do you think any party in particular holds the weight of responsibility for ensuring that effective communication is not hindered by language differences?
9. What are your thoughts on the issue of patient confidentiality in situations when you need to use a family member as a translator (because they are the only or best translation aid available)?
10. Do you have any final thoughts on the topic of language and effective communication that we have not covered so far?
11. Do you have any thoughts or suggestions about how situations in which communication is difficult because of language might be handled differently?