Preliminary results of a multilingual, multicultural survey design

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Introduction: The United States Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality has invested heavily in the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS). Funded by the Qatar National Research Fund, a research team formed of 3 collaborative institutions; Weill Cornell Medical College-Qatar (WCMC-Q), Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and University of Michigan (UM), is working on translating, adapting and modifying CAHPS to generate QCAHPS, an instrument relevant to Qatar and the region population. It is a five-phase project.

Objectives: To translate the existing CAHPS into Arabic, Hindi and Urdu, identify “translation dilemmas”, and to explore patients’ assessment of translation dilemmas and quality of ambulatory care visits based on their own cultural context and preferred language with four linguistic groups, English, Arabic, Hindi, and Urdu.

Methods: Recruitment of qualified research assistants and reviewers (Qatar team) followed by training on interviewing, coding and naming protocols was done. Ethical board approvals from the 3 participating institutions were obtained. Translation of CAHPS highlighted key points under investigation by participants recruited in each target language. Based on interviews of 35 of the targeted 80 interviews, emerging themes of importance have been identified.

Results: Themes noted include: participants repeatedly expressed that the clinical experience of the doctor is more important than cultural awareness, or religion. There were reservations regarding the doctor’s gender when it came to gynecological or genito-urinary system examinations. The term used for a regularly-seen health provider is “Family Doctor” for Hindi, “Regular Doctor” for Urdu and “Specialist” for Arabic and English speaking participants. Although participants were satisfied with services received, the main concerns were lack of interpretation services and communication issues, inefficient appointment system and long waiting time. Handling compensation was noted by research assistants as a sensitive issue.

Conclusion: Our preliminary findings show some important themes that are worth noting and considering in survey design and multicultural and multilingual research.