

Culturally Appropriate Patient Information

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Context/existing situation

Waitemata DHB has a culturally diverse population. For many of our patients, English is not their first language and most currently available patient information cannot be easily understood. This is a concern, especially for long term conditions such as coronary artery disease (CAD), heart failure and diabetes, which require a high level of patient understanding of medicines for them to manage their condition effectively.

Planned change

Create patient materials which focus on three topics: 'Medicines for coronary artery disease'; 'Heart failure medications'; 'Starting insulin for type II diabetes', and translate them into Chinese, Korean and Samoan.

Methods

Together with the cardiology and diabetes departments, booklets were developed in English for the three topics. The Waitemata Health Needs Analysis (HNA) document was used to determine which languages had the greatest need for translation. With the assistance of Asian Health these materials were translated into Chinese, Korean and Samoan. The diabetes department also requested translation into Tongan.

Measurement of improvement

Anecdotal feedback suggests that these material are of benefit to patients, families and staff when counselling patients about medicines for their long term condition. 'Their eyes light up when they see something in their own language'.

Effects of changes

Patients who do not have a good understanding of English can receive information about managing their medicines for heart failure, CAD and insulin in their own language. This information is also available in English for staff to use together with patients when counselling.

Lessons learnt/implications for others

Start with HNA or similar document to determine which languages have the greatest need for translation. Arrange an independent review of the translation to ensure the text is pitched at the right level and the images are culturally appropriate. Allocate sufficient time for independent review and graphic design.