

<u>Workshop ID :</u>	17
<u>Workshop Duration :</u>	Workshop - 1 Day
<u>Workshop Title :</u>	Health care in a multilingual context: bridging the language gap
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In health communication studies the main interest is in how health information is generated and disseminated.

This workshop focuses primarily on various effects of multilingualism in health care. It will highlight existing and developing communicative practices between allophone patients (i.e. those speaking a language other than the local one used in the health service) and health care professionals (HCPs) (who may also be L2 speakers of the local language). HCPs have specialised knowledge that patients do not share, and are also familiar with the health care system. Additionally, they are often proficient in the dominant language(s) in the health care facilities. Research has shown that language barriers can impact strongly on access to and quality of health care. Some studies have even suggested that language and cultural barriers (including differing spiritual and religious beliefs of HCPs and patients) are more important barriers to quality health care than structural and socio-economic barriers (Levin, 2006).

Contributions will specifically attend to health communication in a South African context, including attention to deaf people's access to health care. Deumert and Mabandla (2008, 2010), have reported on the effects when English or Afrikaans speaking personnel in hospitals communicate with (mainly) isiXhosa-speaking patients in the Western Cape. Non-professional, ad-hoc interpreters used in such contexts add to linguistic and communicative complexity (Anthonissen 2010). Also, deaf people's attempts at accessing healthcare services have been shown often to be fraught with frustration (Steinberg et al. 2006; Cristina et al. 2010). In general, HCPs have limited training in communicating in multilingual settings; and they are not well equipped to talk to deaf people and/or use sign language interpreters, or for that matter, any interpreters.

This workshop aims to bring together scholars who, on the basis of insights from recent research, seek to improve communication between individual patients and HCPs as well as between institutions and the public in multilingual (and multicultural) settings. Although the focus will be on the (applied) linguistic aspects of health communication, we also invite contributions from medical and social science arenas.

Contributions will refer to topics such as:

- HCP-patient (or family) interaction in different kinds of consultation
- Interpreter mediated health communication
- intercultural mediation in health care communication
- social media and health communication
- innovative approaches to (sign language) interpreting in medical settings
- effects of the decentralization of health care on communication between patient and caregiver
- access to health care for deaf people with minimal language skills ("homesigners")
- communication and adherence to treatment

- policy provision related to multilingual health communication
- medical migrancy in reference to patients and HCPs
- different understandings of illness, health, the diseased body, etc. in different language communities
- different terminologies, lexical gaps, linguistic conceptualising of disease and health care

In all, the workshop intends to present work that will encourage scholarly reflection on a range of themes that are important to ensure that communicating across language barriers in health care (which is the norm in South African state facilities) is accommodated in such a way that it facilitates the provision of quality medical care.