Enhancing global health through the compilation of a glossary of medical terminology in a local Ghanaian language (Twi)

P. Donkor, E. Fordjour, G. Plange-Rhule, N. Tagoe, B. Barnie; Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, GH

Program/Project Purpose: The need for confidentiality is vital to developing trust as part of the doctor-patient relationship. This is not always possible where interpreters are used to translate for clinicians/patients due to language barrier. Bridging this barrier without the use of interpreters will ensure effective communication and quality care. Twi is the commonest of the local languages in Ghana but not all nationals speak it. However, in the setting of this study Twi is used widely as a means of communication. The number of non-Twi speaking Ghanaian medical students, and foreign students from the West African sub-region studying medicine at KNUST, as well as international students on short term visits continues to increase. Increasing numbers of international clinical research collaborators also visit Ghanaian medical schools and teaching hospitals for varying periods of time. The purpose of this project was to assist non-speakers of Twi to communicate with patients without always requiring an interpreter.

Structure/Method/Design: This is a pilot study. Face to face Interviews, led by a professor of Twi (EAF) were conducted with 24 purposively sampled doctors and nurses at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi, Ghana over a 2-month period in 2014. The interviewees worked in the major Medical disciplines of Internal Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics, Obstetrics/Gynecology, and Dentistry. Common words or phrases used by patients in the consulting room were identified and compiled into a draft document. This was then independently reviewed by a Twi language expert. It was subjected to further review by a second set of physicians who were native Twi speakers and also fluent in English.

Outcomes & Evaluation: A glossary of medical terms in both Twi and English has been compiled. Sections include words, phrases, and body parts. Common expressions have also been captured. Words and phrases have been further grouped based on the specialty where they are most often used. This booklet will assist Ghanaian clinicians and students who do not speak the Twi language to communicate better with patients. It will also help bridge the language barrier for foreign students, clinicians, and research collaborators. It will further facilitate international collaboration in health research, and thus global health. Evaluation will be conducted after 12 months to determine the usefulness of the glossary, and the need for a similar exercise to be carried out for other local Ghanaian languages.

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Improving access to life-saving medicines through mobile community health supply chain management

S. Hodsdon1, R. Luk2; 1Dimagi, Inc., Cambridge, MA/US, 2Dimagi, Cambridge, MA/US

Program/Project Purpose: CommTrack is an open source tool for organizations in low-resource settings to better manage goods and materials from community health workers providing iron supplements for pregnant mothers, to distributing ready-to-use-therapeutic-foods, or ensuring health clinics have adequate supplies of essential medicines such as ARVs. These scenarios, each very different from one another, all require knowledge about "How much do I order? When should I expect a shipment and how to ration until it arrives? Why are my losses so high?" Designed in close collaboration with partners including John