TRIP in Health Language and Communication

Two professional development workshops for healthcare providers titled “Cultural Issues in Health Care Communication” and “Intercultural Aspects of Patient and Provider Communication” were developed and presented at Columbus Regional Hospital, IU Health Bloomington, and St. Vincent Hospital in 2011-2012. Also in the fall of 2012, ICIC produced three 10-15 minute online professional development modules for use as part of the IU Health Nursing Education program to improve healthcare providers’ ability to communicate effectively with linguistically and culturally diverse patients.

ICIC has also worked in collaboration with Dr. Diane Lorant of Wishard Hospital’s level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) to develop a project titled “Critical Language for Critical Care” to address the language and intercultural communication needs of Spanish-speaking parents and NICU nurses; the identification phase of this project partly took place last year and will ultimately lead to the development and provision of healthcare-specific English language training. The project proposal was submitted in January 2013 to the Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CTSI) Project Development Team (PDT) committee, which has given preliminary approval. Expected outcomes of this project are that (1) caregivers provided with specific language skills will be able to provide critical medical information via telephone or in-person during high stress situations, that (2) understanding the specific language used in the daily care of a NICU infant will reduce the stress and enhance the communication between caregivers and healthcare professionals, and that (3) NICU parents will gain specific language skills they can use to respond quickly to emergencies and then relay this information to responders or healthcare professionals.

ICIC research findings have also been incorporated into the annual training workshop provided to new residents in the IU School of Medicine’s Family Practice residency program. Each year 50-75% of residents entering the three-year program are international medical graduates (IMGs). ICIC provides a workshop on intercultural healthcare communication, assesses the cultural and linguistic knowledge of all new residents in the program, and subsequently provides one-on-one training as needed.

To capitalize on this training, in September 2013 ICIC is planning to submit a Funding Opportunities for Research Commercialization and Economic Success (FORCES) grant proposal through the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (OVCR). Through this project, ICIC proposes to engage in a retrospective analysis of an ICIC-developed diagnostic assessment tool, the Interpersonal Communication Assessment (ICA), which ICIC has used over the past seven years to evaluate the intercultural communication skills of IMGs at the IU School of Medicine’s Family Practice Residency Program. The ICA benefits medical residency program directors by contributing a deeper understanding of the language and cultural challenges faced by IMGs, thus pointing to instructional needs that can be met before residents begin their practice. For residents, the benefits include the opportunity to receive training in language and culture, improved communication in healthcare contexts, increased awareness of cultural norms, and increased confidence in oral communication. The ICA was originally developed
collaboratively by ICIC and the Family Practice residency program and is currently administered on paper and hand-scored. The ultimate goal of the project is to revisit the validity work done during the initial development phase and to add reliability work by analyzing test-taker and test results data obtained over the past seven years with a view to developing the tool into an IU-trademarked internet-delivered, automated-scored test for commercialization and distribution to a wider audience.