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## Providing equitable care through intercultural mediation

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## Problems in health care for migrants and ethnic minorities

- Legal/administrative problems (accessibility)
- Lack of culture competence in health care system
- Linguistic barriers
- Socio-cultural barriers
- Interethnic barriers / tensions



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## Linguistic barriers

Negatively affect accessibility and quality of care

- Reduced comprehension and compliance
- Greater number of reported adverse drug reactions
- Lower rates of optimal pain management
- Less adequate management of chronic diseases (diabetes, asthma, ...)



- Ethical/legal standards may not be met
- Patient satisfaction
- Lower provider effectiveness  
(Bowen, 2001; Jacobs et al. 2003; Flores 2005; Karliner et al., 2007)
- Problems with untrained interpreters (Tipton & Furmanek, 2016)



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## Socio-cultural barrier

- Socio-economic status
- Health literacy
- Systematic studies of the effects of culture barriers are extremely scarce



- Immigrants rate language and cultural difference as their biggest barriers to receiving health care (Elderkin-Thompson, 2001)



## Recent immigrants – asylum-seekers

- 'Everything is a problem'
- Limited social network and capital
- Decoding rules, values, and everyday tricks  
(Morten Sodeman, 2011)



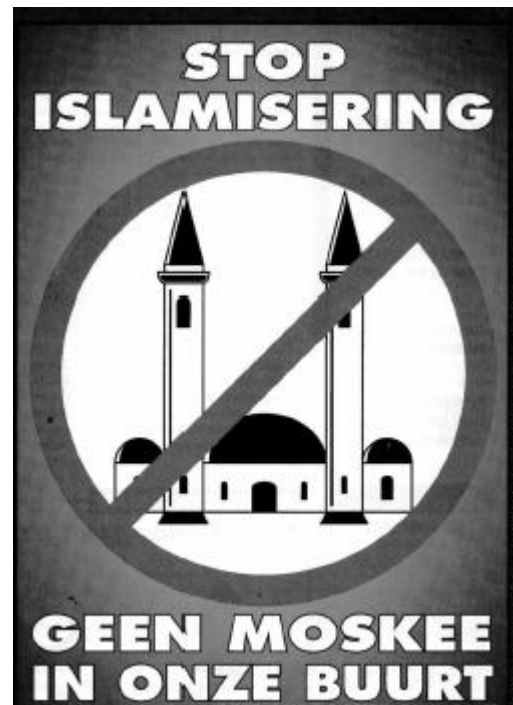
# 'Reassurance: the most difficult clinical task'

Morten Sodeman





## Ethnic barriers – interethnic tensions



## 10 Those barriers negatively affect

- accessibility
- process of health care
- outcome
- patients' rights
- patients' safety
- patient satisfaction
- provider satisfaction
- cost



# Strategies developed to increase equity in health care

- Ethnic health (care) monitoring
- Standards for equity in health care for migrants and other vulnerable groups
- Cultural competence training
- **Employment of intermediaries**



## 12 Employment of intermediaries

### Language-oriented

Translation machine / invisible interpreter

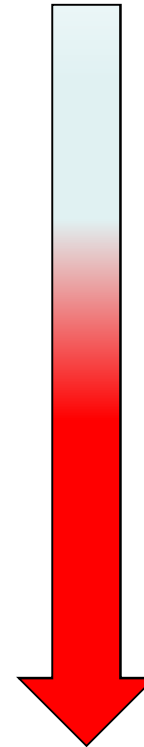
Medical interpreter (NCIHC/IMIA/CHIA)

Intercultural mediator

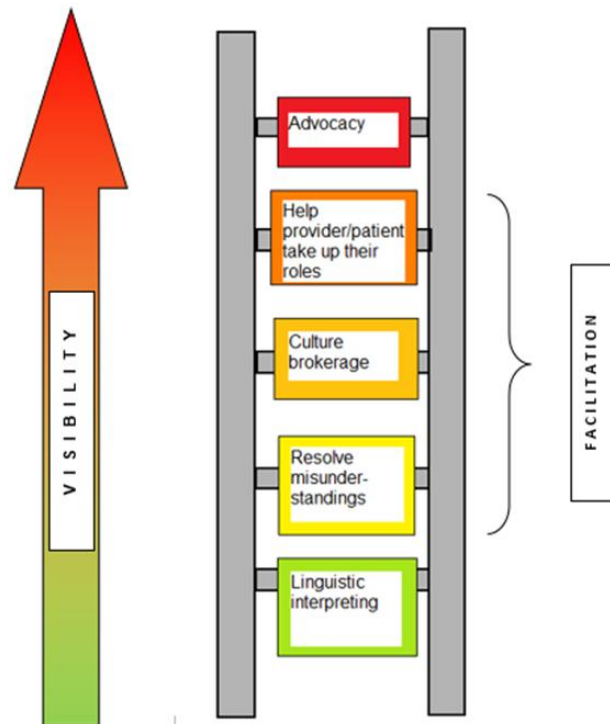
Co-therapist

### Therapy-oriented

(Bot & Verrept, 2013)



# Intercultural mediation in Belgian health care

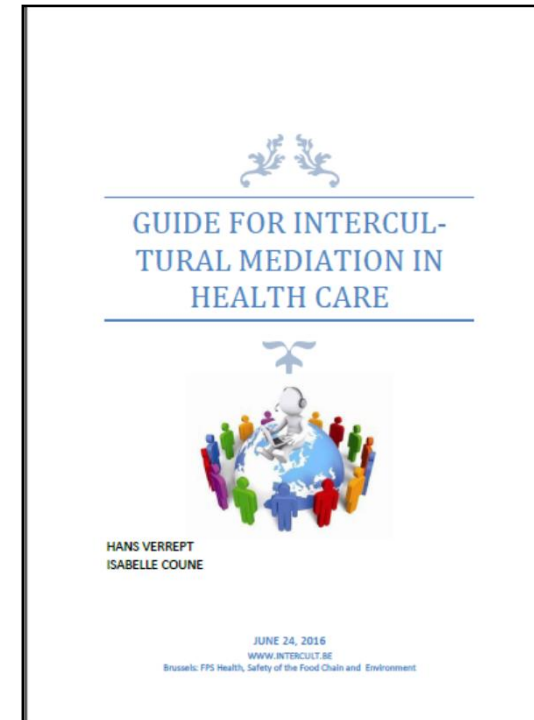


Verrept & Coune, 2016



# Guide for intercultural mediation in health care

- Task description
- Standards for the execution of the different tasks
- Standards for the organization of intercultural mediation services in health care



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## Video-remote intercultural mediation



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## Evaluation

Interventions by professional interpreters are associated with

- overall improvement of care
- increased satisfaction
- decrease communication errors
- increase patient comprehension
- improved clinical outcomes





Evidence remains even if effects of ad hoc interpreters are not separated out

(Flores, 2005 & Karliner et al. 2007)



## 18 Effects of intercultural mediation

Important increase in the quality of care

- Improved communication
- Contributes to the provision of culturally sensitive care
- Positive effects on patient satisfaction

(Verrept, 2008; Rocheron et al, 1988; Guttierrez, 2013)



- Less (re)admissions, length of stay decreases, number of missed appointments decreases
- Cost-effective
- Empowers the patients

(Gutierrez, 2013)



## Discussion and recommendations

- Medical interpreting and intercultural mediation in health care are underresearched domains
- Existing studies have severe methodological limitations
  - mostly American literature
  - lack of information on training, tasks executed



- no distinction made between trained vs untrained interpreters
- small sample size  
(Flores, 2005; Karliner et al., 2007; Pavlish, 2010)
- Still: what is known should encourage policy makers to further develop interpreting and intercultural mediation services and to assess them adequately



- Need for interdisciplinary research published in main-stream medical journals
- Use of video-conference technology to provide interpretation/intercultural mediation in health care (Verrept, 2012)



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## Lessons learned

Importance of:

- Training for the intercultural mediators (<http://www.mediation-time.eu>)

The logo for TIME, with the letters T, I, M, and E in different colors (green, blue, red, blue).

Train Intercultural  
Mediators

for a Multicultural  
Europe!



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- Supervision
- Registration of activities of the intercultural mediators + participant observation
- Standards / Code of conduct / Deontology
- Training sessions for health professionals





More information:

[www.intercult.be](http://www.intercult.be)

