

Use of cultural mediators in healthcare hospital: three years survey.

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Aim: this study reviews utilization of cultural mediators in an university hospital located in North-Eastern Italy. This is a service addressed to immigrants that need cultural, social and linguistic support, aimed to empower an appropriate use of health care services.

Methods: we considered the activity of cultural mediators between January 1, 2006 and June 30, 2009. All cultural mediator requests forms were analyzed, as well as their administrative validations. Information available include:

- identity of patients,
- date of request,
- date of intervention,
- start and end time of the intervention,
- department,
- language,
- type of intervention (translation, conversation, accompaniment).

The hospital includes 1092 beds (947 inbeds and 145 day hospital/day surgery care beds)

Results: the number of interventions per semester and the amount of intervention hours per semester are showed in figure 1.

Overall there are about 30 different spoken languages (figure 2).

Figure 3 shows the distribution of the interventions classified per department.

Single interventions account for 26.6%, whereas the remaining 73.4% is related to patients that needed two or more interventions.

Figure 4 points out the number of interventions for patient stratified by department.

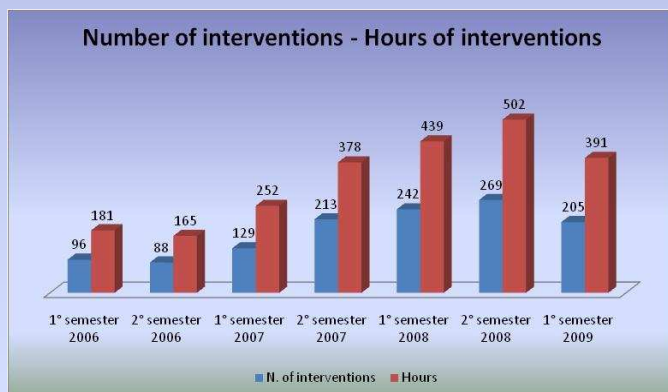


Figure 1

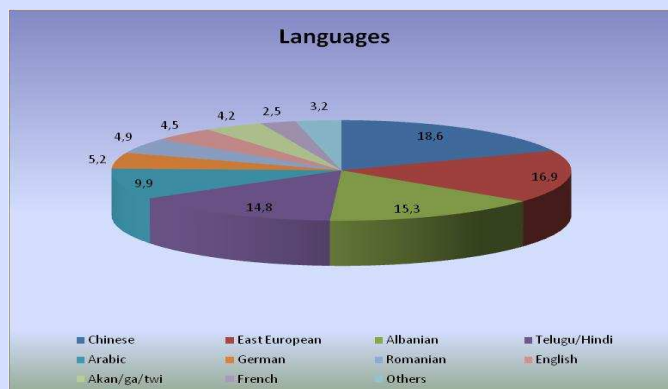


Figure 2

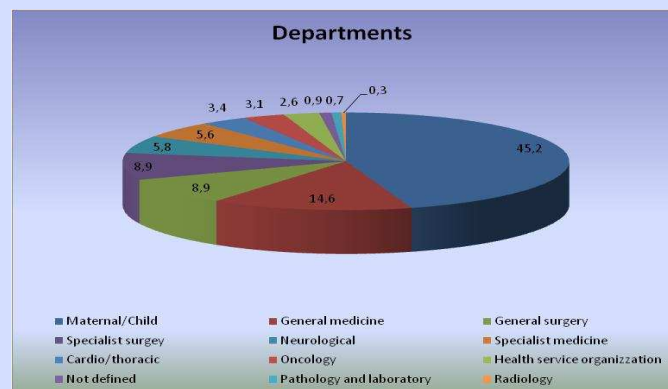


Figure 3

Discussion: these data show an increase of mediators' activity through the years and highlight an important aspect in the empowerment of services aimed to break down cultural, social and linguistic barriers between immigrants and the healthcare services. The majority of interventions belong to the maternal-child department because of the higher immigrants birth-rate (19.6 vs 7.7 births/1000 population). It's important to underline that patients who access to departments which include chronic diseases (like oncology) have lots of interventions. The latter prove that the continuity of care is supported by mediator services giving to patients an important help to cope with their diseases.

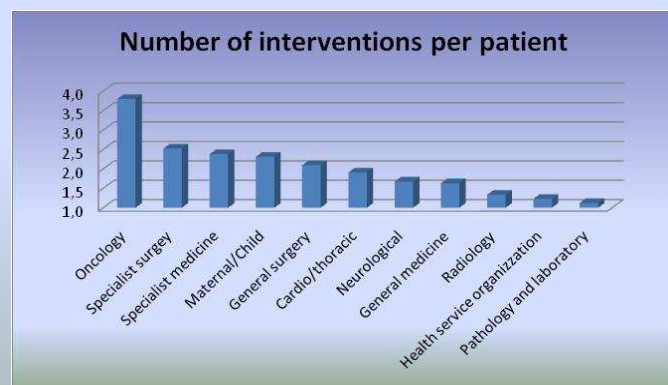


Figure 4