

# English proficiency

Science



This research article focused on therapists' perceptions of clinical and personal characteristics and contextual factors that may influence mental health service delivery to limited English proficiency (LEP) clients through interpreters. Particularly, this study attempted to understand these factors by exploring the lived experiences of clinicians who have worked with LEP individuals through translators.

Analysis of the data collected provided two recurring themes that revolved around the personality and training of both therapist and interpreter. Based on the findings of this research, the author suggested consideration of clinical care for LEP clients, who may be inadvertently marginalised from effective psychotherapeutic intervention, would demonstrate a commitment to social justice. The study under review clearly meets the criteria for qualitative research for the purpose of understanding a complex issue in greater detail as suggested by Liamputtong (2009).

Liamputtong (2009) remarked that an understanding of the components and contextual issues could only be achieved by having direct conversation with people who have lived the experience the researcher sought to investigate. The author states that the 'phenomenological study sought to contribute to understanding these factors by examining the lived experiences of eight therapists skilled in working with LEP individuals through interpreters.' Clearly, one of the strengths of the use of the phenomenological structure is the acceptability of a small number of participants under investigation, which were eight in this case.

Further, this methodological framework afforded the researcher to analyse the data thematically, which identified issues that centred on personality and

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training of both therapists and interpreters. One of the points, supported by evidences and clearly communicated to readers, is that similar to the characteristics central to describing a skilled therapist, the interpreter is not just a mere translator, but an active member of a psychotherapy team whose skill in multicultural issues, mental health training and therapeutic processes, and personality may affect the success of mental health services delivered to LEP individuals through an interpreter. The author though attempted to convince readers of reflexivity, by mentioning the attention given to the search for disconfirming evidence and negative case analysis, however no clarification of this effort was given in any part of the report. Nevertheless, peer debriefers were involved in the study to attend to issues of researcher subjectivity and biases, and researcher's interpretation of data was also subjected to member checking.

Further studies can employ the four kinds of triangulation, namely multiple method, theories, data or source, and researchers, as pointed out by Liamputtong (2009), to underpin the dependability of the findings of this study. Representative rigour was achieved through the appropriate use of purposive sampling technique, which identified participants who have lived experiences of work with LEP clients through interpreters.

Particular attention was paid to selection criteria, to ensure that therapists, though with general clinical expertise, have between a fledgling and expert level experience working with LEP individuals. This would guarantee that consideration about the therapeutic process in working with LEP clients through translators were unconnected to being a beginner clinician. Other factors considered, such as level of professional training, language

and culture of origin were also crucial in ensuring a fit between participant selection, methodology, theoretical framework and research purpose.

In considering the study's interpretative rigour, a broader understanding gained from the result of the findings lend credence to the result of a similar scholarly work conducted by Miller, Martel, Pazdirek, Caruth, and Lopez (2005) which highlighted the impact of the interpreter's role in therapeutic alliance, the management of and challenges that may result from the triadic clinical relationship (of the therapist, interpreter and client), and training of both clinician and interpreter.

Overall, this research achieved a measure of theoretical and methodological rigour by establishing a fit between the research purpose of exploring factors that contribute to delivering successful clinical care to LEP individuals from the clinicians' perspective and the use of phenomenological approach to examine the embodied experiences of these clinicians in greater detail, through the use of semi-structured and open-ended interviews.

## References

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