

Medical Terminology for Mixtec Languages

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Abstract

The creation of a glossary will decrease many health disparities observed in the Mixtec population largely due to language barriers. A glossary of medical terms will be created with the help of interpreters from different Mixtec-speaking regions and medical students who are detailing medical concepts for culturally appropriate translation. The goal will be to distribute this glossary to Mixtec translators and healthcare provider offices to aid in translation resulting in a healthcare system that can understand their needs, alleviate their confusion, and communicate effectively.



Map showing the traditional Mixtec speaking areas in Mexico[1].

Introduction

There are many Mixtec-speaking patients in the county of Santa Barbara [2], with up to 35 Mixtec-speaking varieties [3]. Many were observed to have difficulty navigating the healthcare system as well as receiving appropriate care due to the language barrier [4]. Mixtec is composed of a collection of closely related languages [5], [6], [7], many of which may not be mutually intelligible [8]. Because of this, it is often difficult to disseminate healthcare information to and within the community [9]. In addition, there is a shortage of Mixtec interpreters in California, and medical translation is not very widespread. Since these languages are often not taught in schools [8], speakers are often hesitant to write and read their own language. This makes written translation highly inaccessible to most speakers [9]. Also, many medical concepts and terms do not have an established translation in their native languages. From a provider standpoint, these factors create many obstacles in providing quality health care for this patient population. Mixtec patients often have difficulty trusting, navigating, and complying with healthcare interventions that they do not have a proper understanding of.



The terms will be added to JSILO's online glossary once they've been rechecked!

Methodology

Preparation	A team made of interpreters, medical students, and linguists met to prepare for the workshop. Terms to be introduced in the workshop are determined. Community members who speak varieties of Mixtec are invited and accounted for.
Workshop	Workshop methods and techniques introduced to first-time interpreters. Workshop attendees were divided into 3 groups with each group with a medical student. Each group was given 1 hour to understand and to translate in the Mixtec variation they spoke.
Collection	Interpreters were encouraged to go home and discuss the terms from the workshop with their families. The final translation was sent to the team in writing or in a voice recording. Translations were documented based on regional Mixtec.

Methodology is based on previous workshops organized by JSILO members [10].

Results



Listen to Salustia Ávila presenting some terms in her variety!



Photo taken during the workshops, illustrating group discussion of interpretation techniques and workshop structure.

Term	Yucunani Mixtec, San Juan Mixtepec	San Agustín Atenango Mixtec	San Jorge Río Frijol Mixtec
Hypertension	Tá nít nchua'a tsika nít, ntakusé'è tuchi	Kontita tuchi, ti tütü nít	Dün tün tuchi
Chickenpox	Nít'i ya'a	Nít'i va'a	Din káta
Measles	Nít'i chá'i	Nít'i kusi	Kué kani
Tetanus	Kué'è ntasi'a káa	Jai ka'a	Kue káa
Kidney	Ntuchi (ini)	Nduchi ini	
Liver	Stáa tsáa		
Gallbladder	Kávä	Katü ini titsi	
Anemia	Kóo nchéè nít-ná	Na ntukui nít	
Dialysis	Ntúntoo nít-ná	Ntúo nít ini / nakatína nít ini	
Mammogram		Nana ntójo / Kuaxina ntójo	Nána di kayó
Blood sample		Kana nít	Ntáväa niyóo
Myocardial Infarction		Na sukui anima	
Stroke		Na teenti ti tütü ini xintiki	

Conclusion

- This project impacts 25,000 Mixtec speaking individuals in Santa Barbara county and more [11].
- The methods can be replicated for many cultures and ethnic groups with similar difficulties to access health care.
- Our methodology exemplifies a community-led collaboration in which medical students and linguists offer their expertise to help community members achieve their goals.
- Community involvement and leadership is essential for interventions such as this one to succeed.
- The goal is to distribute these terms to any providers, interpreters that care for the Mixtec community.
- The glossary will be distributed by physical paper as well as a link to our online glossary hosted by JSILO which contains terms that have been previously recorded [10].
- Efforts in translation and interpretation in Indigenous languages are crucial to increase patient centered care, patient education, and patient outcome, and to achieve language justice in broader terms [4].



Photo taken during the workshops, illustrating a working group with a medical student explaining terminology to Mixtec interpreters.

Check our reference list here!



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