



Resident Survey to Evaluate Interest in a Bilingual Certification Pathway



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Objective

To characterize the language skills and interest in testing and certification of the Olive View Medical Center (OVMC) trainees to inform possible changes to the bilingual certification process.

Background

- Access to language assistance is a patient's right under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.
- Although a bilingual certification pathway exists for DHS employees who speak a threshold language at OVMC, residents are excluded from this pathway.
- This puts residents at potential risk by using their language skills.
- To achieve high quality care for patients with limited English proficiency, we must address the lack of a testing and certification process for the use of non-English language in the clinical setting for OVMC trainees.

Methods

- **Study Design:** Anonymous online survey questionnaire deployed between May 18, 2021 and July 12, 2021.
- **Subjects:** Resident physicians who spend more than fifty percent of their time at OVMC were eligible and included OV IM, OV Psych, UCLA EM and UCLA OB/GYN
- **Measures and Outcomes:** Measures included year in training, department, native language, and languages spoken.
- For those reporting Non-English Language skills, we collected their self-reported language ability as a measure by the Interagency Language Roundtable Score.

Results

- Of the 289 residents who received the survey, it was completed by 206 (a 71.3% response rate)

Residency Year	
Incoming Interns 2021-2022	66 (32.0%)
PGY1	51 (24.8%)
PGY2	38 (18.5%)
PGY3	32 (15.5%)
PGY4	19 (9.2%)
Department	
UCLA Emergency Medicine	60 (29.3%)
OVMC Internal Medicine	96 (46.8%)
OVMC Psychiatry	20 (9.8%)
UCLA OB/GYN	29 (14.1%)

Table 1. Resident Demographics.

Native Language of Trainees	
English	181 (88.3%)
Spanish	14 (6.8%)
Armenian	1 (0.49%)
Cantonese / Mandarin	3 (1.5%)
Korean	3 (1.5%)
Vietnamese	1 (0.49%)
Punjabi	1 (0.49%)
Telugu	1 (0.49%)

Table 2. Resident Language Demographics.

Do you use your non-English language skills with patients or clients of the DHS as part of your job?			
Yes: 89 (62.2%)		No: 54 (37.8%)	
On average, how often do you use your non-English language skills with patients or clients?			
Rarely: 10 (11.2%)	Sometimes: 14 (15.7%)	Often: 46 (51.7%)	Always: 19 (21.3%)

Table 3. Non-English Language Use.

Would you be interested in being tested in your non-English language to obtain a bilingual certificate from the County of Los Angeles?			
Yes: 61 (68.5%, 95% CI [0.2347, 0.3635])		No: 28 (31.5%, 95% CI[0.0923, 0.1904])	
If interested in DHS certification, how would you rate your proficiency in your non-English language?			
Level 2: 2 (3.3%)	Level 3: 23 (37.7%)	Level 4: 19 (31.3%)	Level 5: 17 (27.9%)

Table 4. Interest in Bilingual Certification.

Threshold Language	Residents Requesting Consideration for Exam	Residents with ILR Score of 3 or Higher
Arabic	1	1
Armenian	1	1
Cambodian	0	0
Chinese	3	3
Farsi	2	2
Korean	3	3
Russian	0	0
Spanish	45	43
Tagalog	0	0
Vietnamese	1	1
		Total = 54

Table 5. Bilingual Certification Language Interest and ILR Score.

Methods cont.

- The primary outcome for the study was the percent of residents interested in bilingual certification
- **Data Analysis:** Descriptive statistics were performed via Stata for analysis
- IRB exempt approval received by Olive View-UCLA Education & Research Institute - Institutional Review Board

Limitations

- The survey data represents self-reporting of language skills, and actual skills may not qualify provider for DHS certification.
- The survey was administered at a transition time between resident classes, likely lowering response rates. We evaluated data in light of this transition.
- This study takes place in Los Angeles, which is likely to have a higher proportion of LEP patients and a higher proportion of trainees with NEL skills.

Conclusion

There are 61/289 (21%) resident trainees who spend at least 50% of their time at OVMC who answered the survey and are interested in DHS bilingual certification and 36/289 (12.5%) have both interest and self-reported high levels of fluency that portend a passing score on the certification exam. Providing these 61 residents with a pathway for bilingual certification would be an opportunity to improve care for limited English proficiency patients at OVMC.

Future Directions:

- Findings will be presented to the CMO and DIO at OVMC
- Work in conjunction with OVMC Administration to launch a pilot project for resident certification.
- Findings will inform hospital and county policy to provide a bilingual certification pathway for residents