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Bridging language barriers by implementing a translated-based triage scale manual into the mother tongue language: a tool for strengthening emergency care

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Dear Editor,

Emergency Medicine (EM) is a promising novel specialization in Greece. EM is a young but fast-developing field that should benefit by adopting and incorporating elements from countries where the specialization is already well-established. The first and most crucial stage in every overcrowded Emergency Department (ED) is triage, namely the process by which patients are categorized according to their clinical severity. In a recent study, we aimed to evaluate the effect of triage training of Emergency Nurses (ENs) in the use of the Swiss Triage System (STS) manual translated into Greek, after an intervention of one week.

The effect of triage training was studied experimentally by comparing performance before and one week after training. A sample of thirty-six ENs from the University Department of Emergency Medicine at AHEPA University Hospital took part. The role of training in triage by the STS was assessed by completing the same self-administered questionnaire before and after a 45-minute e-learning program (presentation video of STS but with simulation scenarios) alongside the translated STS manual in Greek, which was available during the period of a week. The post-training test was taken 2 weeks later, after the training process.

The most promising finding was that there was a significant improvement in the number of correct answers after the training in triage ($p < 0.001$). A significant improvement was also detected ($p < 0.001$) in the questions that tested vigilance in providing safe health

services by ENs, whereas there was no significant association between the number of correct answers and years of emergency experience or level of education, either before or after the intervention.

The present study has tried to fill the gap in Greek EDs by showing that triage training of ENs by using e-learning with presentation and simulation scenarios alongside the translated STS manual in Greek has a positive impact. It is beyond any doubt, that adaptation of any scale by a system, demands that it should be translated into the mother-tongue language of the staff working within this system in order to achieve high and consistent performance. Therefore, we have translated STS into the Greek language, aiming to provide a valuable tool to Greek EDs for training and improvement of clinical performance. Although further research is required on how this new approach would benefit the overcrowded ED and patients' waiting times, this is the first report on effective triage training within the Greek health system.¹⁻⁴

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