

Video
Transcript

TRANSCRIPT

Working Effectively with an Interpreter

In this video, Dr. Wilson, a White male, is about to see Mr. Sok, a middle-aged Cambodian man who has come to the doctor's office because of his stomach pain. An interpreter is sitting in the room with the patient to assist with the interpretation.

In this video, Mr. Sok is speaking in Khmer, the language of Cambodia, Dr. Wilson is speaking in English, and James is the one interpreting for them.

Dr. Wilson enters the examining room holding Mr. Sok's file, while Mr. Sok and the interpreter are sitting next to each other.

Dr. Wilson: Hello, I'm Dr. Wilson. Who's the patient?

Interpreter: *[Addressing the patient]* Excuse me, Sir. I'm going to introduce myself to the doctor first.

Interpreter stands up to introduce himself.

Interpreter: Hi, I'm James.

Dr. Wilson: Hello, James.

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Interpreter: I'm one of the staff interpreters. I'm going to interpret for Mr. Sok today. I'll be interpreting everything you both say, exactly as you say it. Please speak directly to the patient, and speak in relatively short segments so that I can interpret accurately. If I make a hand signal like this *[Holding his hand up]*, please pause so I can interpret. Is there anything special I should know about this appointment?

Dr. Wilson: No, I think this should be fairly routine.

Interpreter: Um, fine. I already introduced myself to the patient—to Mr. Sok—and told him the same things I told you.

Dr. Wilson: Great. Thank you.

Dr. Wilson and interpreter both sit down.

Dr. Wilson: Hello, Mr. Sok. I'm Dr. Wilson; what brings you to the clinic today?

Interpreter: Hello, Mr. Sok. I'm Dr. Wilson; what brings you to the clinic today?

Mr. Sok/
Interpreter: I have a stomach pain.

Dr. Wilson: I see. And what kind of stomach pain?

Interpreter: What kind of stomach pain?

Mr. Sok/
Interpreter: It hurts here *[Pointing at his stomach]* when I finish eating, and then it burns up in my chest.

Dr. Wilson/
Interpreter: And how long has this been going on?



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Mr. Sok: It happened about three years ago, but recently it seems to come more often...and the pain is worse.

[Mr. Sok addresses the interpreter this time] I think there might be a spirit that is causing me this problem. Should I tell the doctor about it?

Interpreter: It's happened about three years ago, but, recently it seems to come more often and the pain is worse. The interpreter would like to say...um...the patient...um...has a traditional belief about what is causing this problem, but he is asking me whether or not to tell you about it.

Dr. Wilson/
Interpreter: Mr. Sok, I'd be very interested to know what you think about this problem.

Mr. Sok: Since I've come to America, I've never done any anniversary ritual to my parents' spirit...who died during the Pol Pot regime. They both died of starvation. They might be mad at me and making me sick.

Interpreter: Since I've been to America, I've never done any anniversary ritual to my parents' spirit who died during the Pol Pot regime. They both died from starvation. Maybe they are mad at me and making me sick.

[Addressing Mr. Sok] I am going to explain to the doctor about the belief you just mentioned.

Mr. Sok nods his head in agreement.

Interpreter: The interpreter would like to clarify that in Cambodia, it is traditional to do a special ritual every year after a family member dies to remember that person's spirit. The person's spirit can be offended...and cause you to get sick. Traditionally, he would go to a fortune-teller, and the fortune-teller would tell him the type of ritual they should do to satisfy the spirit and be treated.

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- Dr. Wilson: *[Addressing the interpreter]* I see. Thank you.
- Dr. Wilson/
Interpreter: *[Addressing the patient]* Mr. Sok, I'm very sorry to hear about your parents; that must be very hard for you.
- Dr. Wilson: I wouldn't be surprised if your worry might have something to do with your stomach pain. Have you...have you consulted a fortune-teller?
- Interpreter: I wouldn't be surprised if your worries cause you to have stomach pain. Have you consulted a fortune-teller yet?
- Mr. Sok: No, not yet. I would like to try the doctor's treatment first.
- Interpreter: No, not yet, but I thought maybe I would like to try the doctor's treatment first.
- Dr. Wilson: Uh, huh. And what have you tried?
- Interpreter: Have you tried any medicine?
- Mr. Sok: Yes, I took Maalox.
- Interpreter: I have been taking Maalox.
Dr. Wilson writes down this information.
- Dr. Wilson: And has it helped you any?
- Interpreter: Has it helped?
- Mr. Sok/
Interpreter: It helps, but when the medicine wears off...my stomach starts to hurt again.
- Dr. Wilson: Well, Mr. Sok, I think you may have an ulcer and I can give you some medicine for that.
- Interpreter: Mr. Sok, I think you have a stomach ulcer, and I can give you medicine for this.
- Dr. Wilson: On the other hand, I understand that you're worried about your parents' spirits and that could make you sick, too. What do you think you should do about this problem?



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Interpreter: On the other hand, I understand that you worry about your parents' spirits, and this worry can make you sick, too. What do you think you should do about this problem?

Mr. Sok: I think I should go to consult the fortune-teller about this, too. But maybe the medicine will help me get better.

Interpreter: I think I could go to the fortune-teller about this too, but, maybe I'll get better with the medicine.

Dr. Wilson: Okay, why don't we do this? I'm going to give a prescription for your pain.

[Physician writes down the name of the medication] This is a prescription for ranitidine. You take one, twice a day.

Interpreter: Now, let's do this first: I am going to give you a prescription for ranitidine. You take one, twice a day.

Dr. Wilson: And I would like to see you back here in about a month...just to see how you're doing. Meanwhile, you can think about whether or not you want to go to a fortune-teller about your parents' spirits. How does that sound?

Interpreter: And I would like to see you back in a month, because I want to know if you are better or not. Meanwhile, you can think if you want to go to the fortune-teller about your parents' spirit. How does that sound to you?

Mr. Sok: Good!

Interpreter: It's good.

Dr. Wilson: Well, good. Do you have any questions?

Interpreter: Mr. Sok, do you have any questions?

Mr. Sok/

Interpreter:

Dr. Wilson: Well, here's your prescription then.



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Interpreter: This is your prescription.
Mr. Sok: I would like to thank you, Doctor.
Interpreter: Thank you very much, Doctor.
Dr. Wilson: Well, thank you.

Dr. Wilson shakes hands with Mr. Sok and the interpreter.