

Fact Sheet on Francophone Minority Communities and Active Offer

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Francophone Minority Communities and Active Offer

Francophone minority communities (FMCs):

- In Canada, around 1 million Francophones live in minority official-language communities¹
- Language is considered a determinant of health.²
- More than half of Francophones in minority language communities rarely or never have access to services in their language.³

Consequences of not receiving services in the language of one's choice

- Increase in diagnostic or treatment errors
- Increased number of tests (rise in costs)
- Greater risk of professional errors
- Tendency for people to delay or avoid standard care
- Inadequate management of chronic diseases
- Low level of patient compliance with treatment⁴

¹ <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/com-com.nsf/fra/00030.html>

² Bouchard, L., Desmeules, M. (2011). *Minorités de langue officielle du Canada : Égales devant la santé?* Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Bouchard, L., Beaulieu, M. & Desmeules, M. (2012). *L'offre active de services de santé en français en Ontario : Une mesure d'équité*. Rapport préparé pour le Bureau des services en français du Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée de l'Ontario. Réseau de recherche appliquée sur la santé des francophones de l'Ontario.

³ Gagnon-Arpin, I., L. Bouchard, A. Leis & M. Bélanger. « Accès et utilisation des services en langue minoritaire ». Dans *La vie dans une langue officielle minoritaire au Canada*, édité par Rodrigue Landry, 193-219. Québec, Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval (PUL), 2014.

⁴ Bowen, S. (2015). Impact des barrières linguistiques sur la sécurité des patients et la qualité des soins (p. 62). Consulté à l'adresse <http://santefrancais.ca/wp-content/uploads/SSF-Bowen-S---tude-Barri--res-linguistiques.pdf>

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DÉFIS POUR LE CLIENT

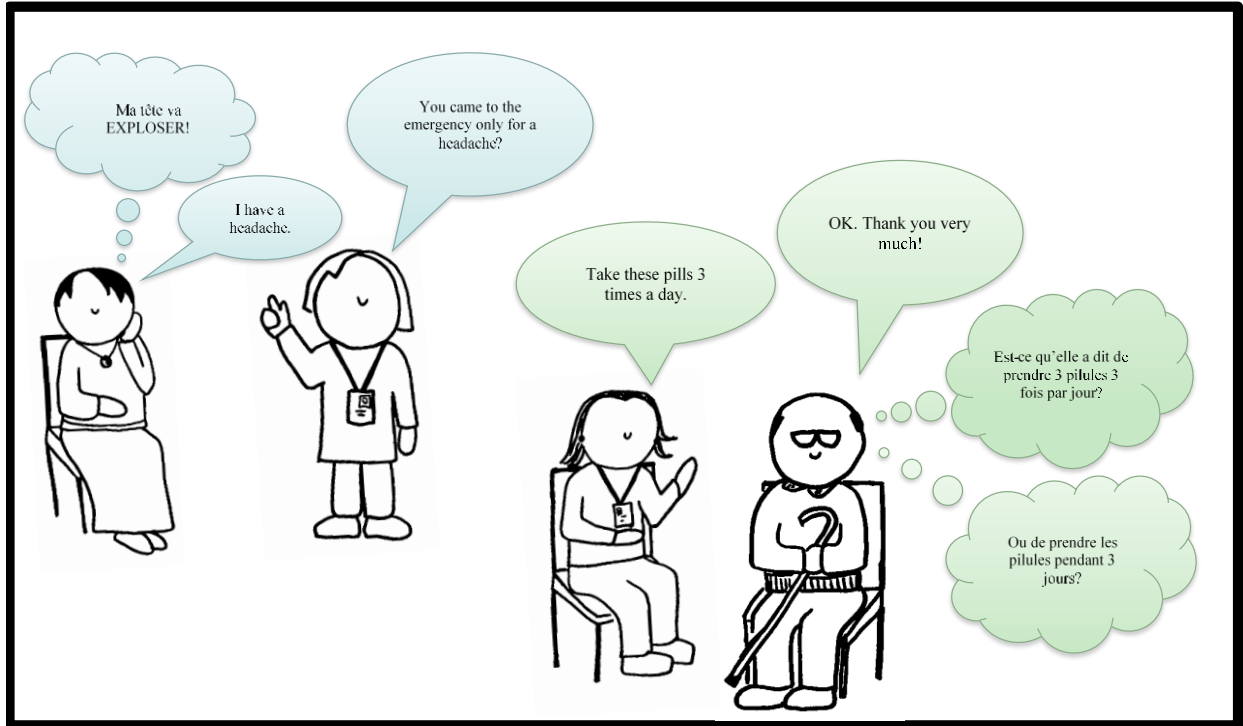


Illustration by Katherine Sauv -Schenk

CHALLENGES FACING THE CLIENT

My head is about to explode!		You came to Emergency only for a headache!		OK. Thank you very much.	
	I have a headache.		Take these pills 3 times a day.		Did he say to take 3 pills 3 times a day?
					Or to take the pills for 3 days?

Why would Francophones avoid asking for services in French?

- They do not believe that a given service is available in French.
- They believe that there will be longer wait times for a given service.
- They question their ability to understand technical information in French, even though they would prefer to talk about some of their symptoms or problems in French.
- They find it easier to speak English than to listen to a health professional speaking French with difficulty.⁵

⁵ Drolet, Marie, Jacinthe Savard, S bastien Savard, Jos e Beno t, Isabelle Arcand, Jos e Lagac , Sylvie Lauzon & Claire-Jehanne Dubouloz (2014). "Health services for linguistic minorities in a bilingual setting: Challenges for

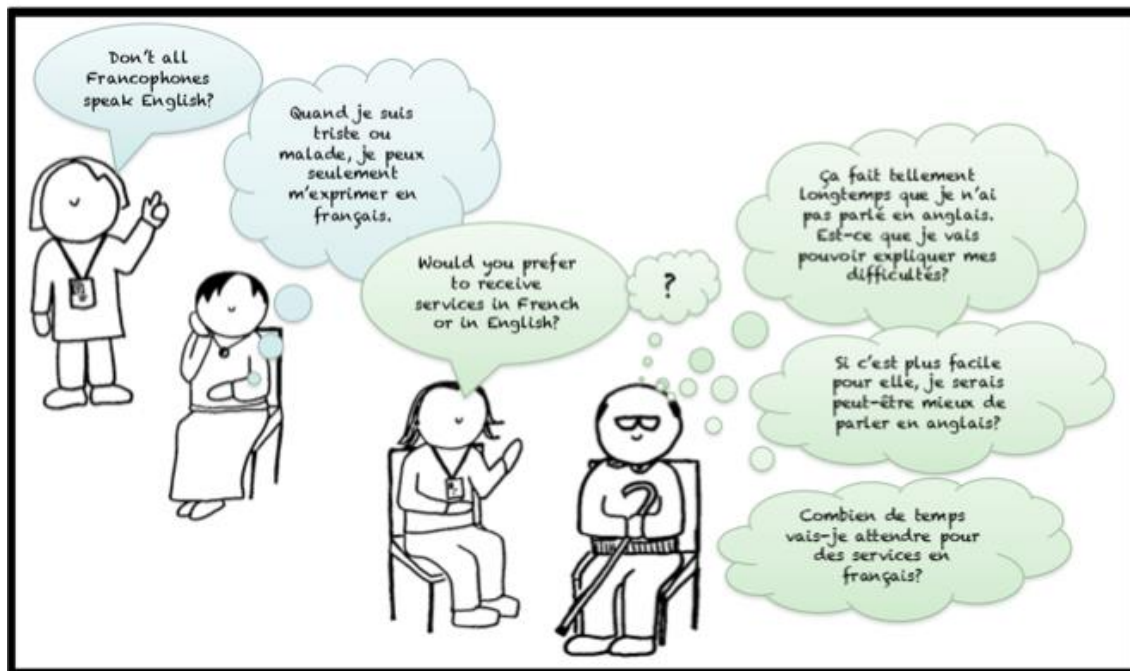


Illustration by Katherine Sauv -Schenk

Don't all Francophones speak English?				I haven't spoken English in such a long time, will I be able to explain my problems?
	When I feel sad or sick, I can only express myself in French.		?	If it's easier for her, I might as well speak English.
		Would you prefer to receive services in French or in English?		How long am I going to have to wait for services in French?

bilingual professionals", *Qualitative Health Research*, vol. 24, n^o 3 (February), p. 295-305, doi: 10.1177/1049732314523503.

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Landry, Rodrigue, R al Allard et Kenneth Deveau (2008). « Un mod le macroscopique du d veloppement psycholinguistique en contexte intergroupe minoritaire », *Diversit  urbaine*, num ro hors s rie, p. 45-68.

Landry, Rodrigue, Kenneth Deveau et R al Allard (2006). « Vitalit  ethnolinguistique et construction identitaire : le cas de l'identit  bilingue », * ducation et francophonie*, vol. 34, n^o 1, p. 54-81.

What is the active offer of French-language health services?

Active offer is multifaceted, but may be simply defined as “a verbal or written invitation for people to express themselves in the official language of their choice. The offer to speak in the official language of their choice must precede the request for services.”⁶ (p. 46)

Active offer is also defined as a set of measures taken to ensure that French-language health services are readily available, accessible and known, and that the quality of these services is comparable to that of English services.⁷

The Consortium national de formation en santé (CNFS) (2012) goes even further, stating that,

The active offer of quality French-language health services is not limited to offering services in the patient's language; it also includes a general approach to planning and delivering health services to a minority language community. This involves a proactive approach that takes into account the community's health status and its historical lack of health services in French. This approach involves mobilizing the community; it takes into account the cultural diversity of patients or beneficiaries; it is part of an ethical perspective; it implements positive intervention measures, where needed; it aims to ensure quality services and equity of the benefits to which all Francophone citizens of Canada are entitled, regardless of their minority situation (p. 10) [Our translation]

Language is therefore a key factor for ensuring both the quality of health services provided and patient safety.

Measures that can be taken by health professionals

- Greeting people in both languages
- Recording language preference in the patient's file
- Identifying themselves as being able to offer services in French
- At the very first contact, ask patients which language they prefer using to talk about their health
- Providing a French message on the answering machine
- Keeping an up-to-date list of Francophone resources
- Showing that they are comfortable in French, telling patients that they can explain their problem in French

For further information on the measures that health professionals can take to offer services in French, see the following articles:

⁶ Bouchard, Louise, Marielle Beaulieu & Martin Desmeules (2012). « L'offre active de services de santé en français en Ontario : une mesure d'équité ». *Reflets : revue d'intervention sociale et communautaire* 18(2), 38-65.

⁷ RIFSSSO (2012). *Trousse d'appui RH : Vers un service bilingue*, RIFSSSO, 23 pages.

Savard, J., Casimiro, L., Benoît, J., Bouchard, P. (2014). « Évaluation métrologique de la Mesure de l'offre active de services sociaux et de santé en français en contexte minoritaire ». *Reflets : revue d'intervention sociale et communautaire*, 20(2), 83-122.

Savard, J., Casimiro, L., Bouchard, P., Benoît, J. (2017 in press). « Les comportements favorables à l'offre active, leur mesure et leurs déterminants », Chapter 12, In Drolet, M., Bouchard, P. & Savard, J. (eds.), *Santé et services sociaux : Accessibilité et offre active en contexte linguistique minoritaire (chap. 12)*. Ottawa: Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa.