

# SPANISH IN PROFESSIONAL WORK ENVIRONMENTS REMOTE (STATEWIDE)

## LANGUAGE USE IN HEALTH CARE

With the United States Spanish speaking population at a constant increase, it will be more and more necessary to have medical professionals with adequate language skills. The Spanish language is the next most widely language used in the United States besides English. Therefore, there is a major importance on how to gain better access not just translators but also how to properly incorporate cultural awareness and understanding to interactions with patients.

The Language for Specific Purposes team is working to address language barriers in health and medical fields with the goal of advancing health equity through improved communication.

As CSU is moving towards becoming a Spanish speaking Hispanic serving institute this research project will models an effective way to connect fields of study (i.e., Medicine and Language).

## RESEARCH AND PROJECT GOALS

The Colorado State University Language for Specific Purposes team (CSU-LSP) is seeking to develop and implement an evidence-based program aimed at improving Spanish language access and cross-cultural understanding for English dominant practitioners in the medical and criminal justice systems.

Our goal is to give practitioners in all areas of health the ability to sensitively communicate with their Spanish-speaking clients, thereby providing those clients a fair and just opportunity to live the healthiest life possible through improved communication.

## PERSONAL FUTURE GOALS

I chose to apply to this research team because the goals of the project align greatly with my own. I currently a Spanish major in hopes of attending nursing school in the following year.

I chose Languages, Literatures, and Cultures as my major as a hope to gain language skills that I could use to help a wider range of communities as well as work abroad in other countries. The knowledge I developed over the summer pushed my skills to another level. I learned the incorporation of language and culture into real world scenarios.

## WHERE WE FIT IN

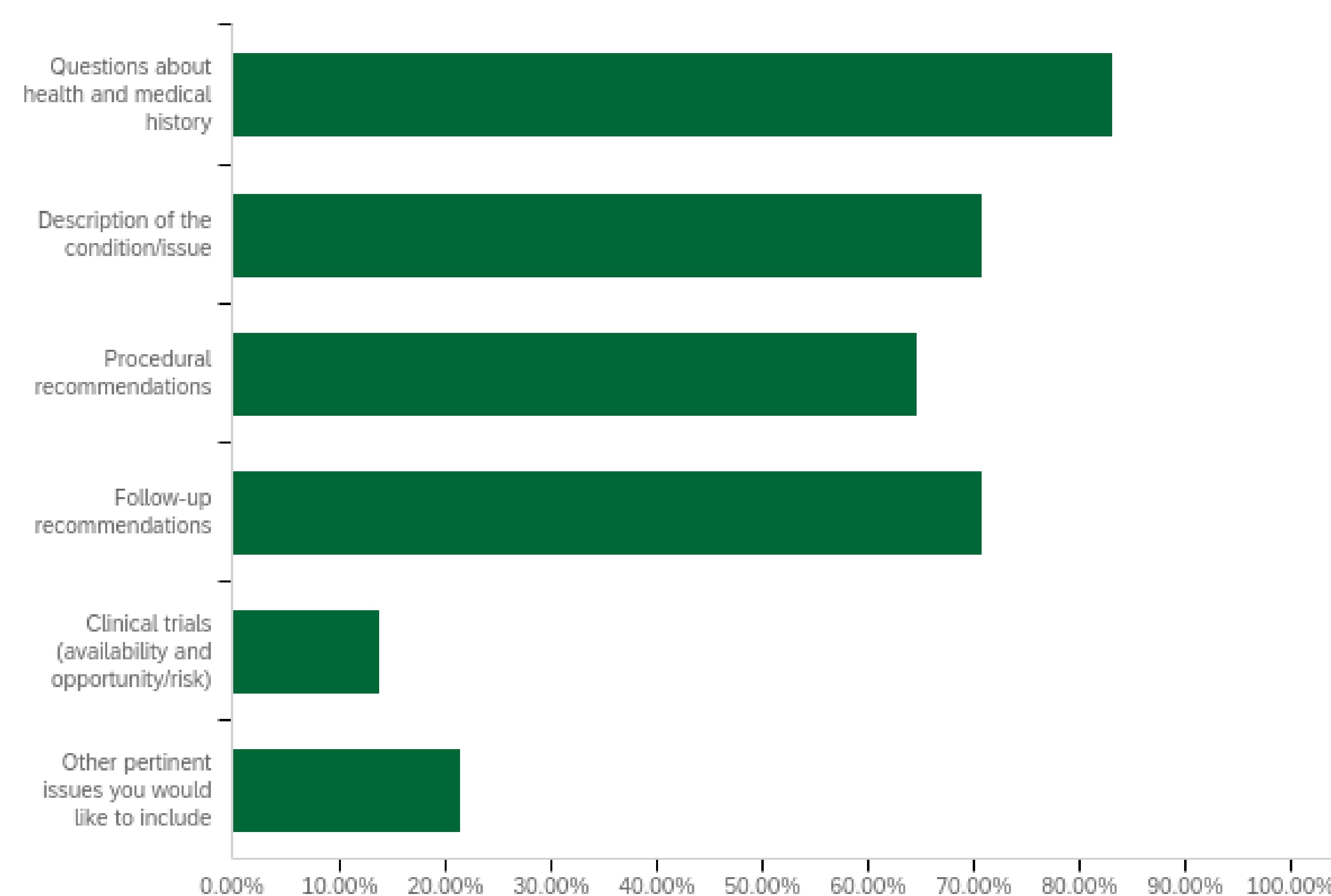
My intern position consisted of helping start phase one of the study. This phase consisted a needs-based analysis research study to gain proper information and understanding to design the desired program.

The data collection is designed to use of quantitative surveys, observations and interviews with stakeholders (including Spanish-speaking or bilingual clients/patients and English-speaking or bilingual lawyers, police officers, doctors, nurses, technicians, social workers, therapists, receptionists, etc.). I began the summer creating the survey questions that were distributed to the stakeholders. This survey was taken by over 90 participants.

The second month of my work consisted of more reading and comprehension on what information is needed for the research project. After analyzation of past studies my mentors and I constructed interview questions for stakeholders as well as community members. I then organized and shadowed interviews. The last step was transcribing the dialog in order to have references for the course content design.

Figure 1.

Do you feel that your Spanish-dominant patients sufficiently understand the following?



## GAINED SKILLS AND ABILITIES

I learned an extensive number of hard and soft skills throughout my experience this summer:

- i. I have sat in Spanish classrooms since I was 12 years old, however I have never applied the language to a professional environment or workspace. I learned how to use the language in a method of communication not to earn a grade or joke with a friend, but how to execute a job and work with professionals.
- ii. I had been slightly introduced to Qualtrics in a past research project however this internship provided a way to bring my abilities to the next level. I individually designed a 30-question survey that has received over 90 responses.
- iii. I became proficient with the use of Calendly and Zoom in order to manage interviews and transcriptions.
- iv. I had become accustomed to online learning throughout the pervious school year; however, I had never worked remotely before. Weekly meetings and individual work guided my day-to-day lifestyle for June and July. My time had to be divided and efficient when I was on my own. This led to a developmental growth of my time management and self reliability skills.

## DATA AQUIRED

- 98% of respondents say they have at least some patients who are Spanish dominant
- Around 80% of participants said their interactions with Spanish speaking patients are successful. When asked to explain why they didn't consider these interactions successful, respondents said:
  - "The quality of interpretation provided by interpreters is also highly variable."
  - "Often times when I ask a patient to say back to me what I've explained to them through an interpreter, I find my patients are very confused"

## NEXT STEPS

The next steps of this study are to complete phase one of the study and enter into phase two. Phase two would consist of creating and implementing the desired program. This programs goals are to take students to certain proficiency, contain research-based content, in depth explanation of cultural awareness.

A student would be able to walk away from the program with a degree in Languages for Specific Purposes with concentrations in either law, medicine, or mental health.