



# Discharge Instructions for Spanish-Speaking Patients: A House Staff Perspective

Danielle A. D'Annibale, MD, Lucas K. Keyt, MD, Gregory Seymann, MD  
Department of Internal Medicine, UC San Diego Health

UC San Diego Health

## INTRODUCTION

- A large proportion of hospitalized patients at UCSD speak Spanish as their primary language
- While there is access to medical translators during hospitalization, there is not a formal process for providing written discharge instructions in Spanish
- This QI project aimed to assess UCSD physicians' perspectives regarding their ability to effectively provide discharge instructions to Spanish-speaking patients that maximize positive health outcomes post-hospitalization

## METHODS

- Designed a 7-question survey addressing discharge instructions provided to Spanish-speaking patients
- Administered the survey electronically in March 2023 to UCSD Internal Medicine resident physicians and administrative attending physicians involved in the residency program
- Provided a 2-week period for participants to complete the survey voluntarily and anonymously
- Analyzed all responses using descriptive statistics

## RESULTS

Among the 35 participants who completed the survey:

- 74.3% “always” or “often” provided discharge instructions in English to Spanish-speaking patients
- 91.4% responded that providing instructions in English to Spanish-speaking patients “always” or “often” represented a barrier to care
- 94.3% indicated that they “always” or “often” would use pre-written translator-approved Spanish phrases if provided
- “Always or often” was selected by 91.4% regarding the potential impact of Spanish discharge instructions on improving outpatient follow-up, 88.6% regarding improving medication use, and 74.3% on reducing readmission rates

## CONCLUSIONS

- Most Internal Medicine house staff indicated that providing discharge instructions in English to Spanish-speaking patients is a barrier to adequate healthcare at UCSD hospitals
- Providing discharge instructions in patients' native language may improve follow-up and medication compliance, as well as reduce readmission rates
- Current efforts are being made to have certified interpreters review our drafted discharge template written in Spanish, with goal of developing it into an Epic dot phrase that can be used by UCSD house staff in future discharge instructions

