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Marie Houston  
Marketing Officer  
Health Deafinitions

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Dear Marie

I'm happy to reply to your email regarding my experiences.

I am probably a bit unusual as a GP in that I studied BSL up to Level 2, many years ago, since my eldest son is profoundly deaf.

As a result, the profoundly deaf patients in my practice tend to come and see me, although to be honest I still find the consultations difficult even with a professional BSL interpreter present, which we always try to arrange. The reasons for this are many, including the extra time needed to translate back and forth in BSL (my BSL skills are not good enough to practice medicine with, on my own), but also as you mentioned, the low educational attainment of many Deaf people. You say that it is not the doctor's job to educate, but actually that is not the case. We do try to give everyone health education, it's not just about tablets. However with Deaf patients it is harder because their level of understanding of health matters may not be that good in the first place.

I am very supportive of your bid to try and produce and disseminate educational materials in BSL about common health problems. One of the key determinants of good outcomes for patients is their level of understanding and ability to assert their needs.

An informed patient is an empowered patient!

I wish you well with the project

Regards

Mike

Mike Lawson MBChB MRCP