Bridging language barriers to good health

Abstract

Not speaking the language in which the healthcare system operates – English in Australia – has serious health consequences. For instance, in Australia, the Covid-19 mortality rate of the overseas-born was 3 times higher than that of the Australia-born. More severe outcomes such as hospitalizations and ICU admissions were observed among Indigenous and migrant minorities internationally and the OECD has attributed these disparities, inter alia, to language barriers.

This seminar provides an overview of the forms of language barriers, explores their consequences for individual health outcomes and group health disparities, and identifies what can be done to bridge them.

Biography

Ingrid Piller is Distinguished Professor of Applied Linguistics at Macquarie University. Her research expertise includes intercultural communication, language learning, multilingualism, and bilingual education. Her latest book is Life in a New Language (Oxford University Press, 2024).

To find out more about her work and that of her team, visit languageonthemove.org.