Introduction

Previous efforts to develop a general medical terminology translation glossary and electronic tool from English to Inuktitut (“MedInuktitut”) sparked a particular interest to expand and enhance the section on mental health terminology. This prior work, together with active clinical training in the field of psychiatry, informs the current project. The goals were to: a) learn about and better understand the use of terminology regarding mental health in Inuktitut, b) publish and disseminate the glossary through a simple to use online tool and mobile app for clinicians at the point of care, and c) test the use of the terminology and make ongoing additions and changes to reflect more appropriate and locally understandable language.

Methods

While initiating the current project, it became clear that such “mental health” terminology doesn’t exist in the fullest (and Western) sense in Inuktitut, at least in the same way that it does in English. As a result, ethnographic and linguistic reports and other documents were researched and reviewed, concurrently with reports prepared by the Government of Nunavut, Canada which has ongoing efforts to generate and standardize medical and health terms. A subset of terms that were deemed the most important and likely to be used by mental health clinicians were then selected to be used in the online tool and mobile app. The design and platform of the electronic media (e.g. the online tool and mobile app) existed from previous efforts as described above, thus the newly generated Mental Health Glossary was simply added to the previous database.

Conclusions

Use testing of the Mental Health Glossary is ongoing and will take some time given the small numbers of mental health clinicians able to test the electronic tools in the field. It is hoped that the continued efforts and updates to the glossary will improve clinician-patient communication and do so in a more culturally appropriate and safe manner.

References

