

## Preface

*Checklists for Cultural Assessment* is one of a number of materials produced for Queensland Health by the Australian Centre for International & Tropical Health & Nutrition, The University of Queensland. It derives from research conducted to identify cultural and linguistic issues among people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, which affect their use of hospital services, their understanding of procedures within hospitals, and the quality of care provided to them.

Our goal is to enhance the delivery of health care and the quality of care to disadvantaged communities, including people from ethnic backgrounds who experience difficulties in accessing conventional services because they believe them to be inappropriate and culturally- and gender-insensitive.

The *Guidelines to Practice* discuss general areas that affect people's experience of hospitalisation, and their needs as they work through the hospital process from admission to separation. *Cultural Diversity: A Guide for Health Professionals* offers brief profiles of a number of communities in Queensland (and elsewhere in Australia), with information about cultural beliefs, practices and life-events. The profiles were prepared for health providers whose clients included people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and include generic information (telephone number for TIS [Translating and

Interpreting Service], Migrant Resource Centres, etc.), general community information, and summary data from health research conducted with the communities. This material may be a useful supplement to *Guidelines to Practice* and these Checklists.

The *Checklists for Cultural Assessment* were prepared with assistance of staff from various hospitals in Southeast Queensland, interpreters, and consumers from various cultural backgrounds. Our purpose in compiling the Checklists and the companion *Guidelines to Practice* is to address some of the issues of greatest concern to hospital staff working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, other than Indigenous Australians<sup>1</sup>. We expect that the Checklists will be used as a ready reference to improve communication with, quality of care, and hence health outcomes for people from diverse backgrounds. The *Guidelines to Practice* is a resource book which provides greater detail.

Our aim is to encourage greater awareness of some of the differences which you face when providing care to people from different backgrounds from your own, and greater sensitivity to the causes of problems that may arise in providing this care. We hope that by raising awareness, you will be able to develop appropriate and effective interventions to assist in the care of patients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

<sup>1</sup> For information about issues relating to Indigenous patients, contact the Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officer at your hospital.

Many of the issues raised in these Checklists relate to basic quality care, and can be equally applied to the care of all Australians. When language and cultural differences exist as well, these quality care issues become even more important.

The Checklists identify the kinds of issues, aspects of illness and areas of care in which culture might make a difference. *The Checklists for Cultural Assessment and Guidelines to Practice* are aimed at staff from a variety of different professional backgrounds and disciplines, and we hope that staff from all wards/departments will find them useful.

ISBN: 0-7242-9305-1

