

investigations

The potential problems with investigations among patients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are inadequate explanation of the procedure and lack of understanding of the results, as illustrated in the Introduction. It is crucial that communication in these areas is accurate.

Pathology

People from some cultures are hesitant to give blood or have blood tests because they do not understand the reasons these need to be done. Some people interpret the common weakness experienced after a blood sample is taken as a removal of part of their life force. Others who are not familiar with such processes may fear what will happen to their blood, and in some communities there is a belief that witches take other people's blood and this is an indication of imminent death.

Providing a stool sample may also cause difficulty if an explanation of how this is done is not given.

Radiology

Scans and X-rays may be confusing. Explain that scanning a baby is not an X-ray and is not dangerous for the baby. Interpreters may not know this either.

It is important to explain procedures adequately beforehand.

Most know they will have an X-ray if they have a broken bone, but not necessarily for other problems. One woman became very distressed when she found herself in Nuclear Medicine, because she assumed she had cancer and was there for its treatment. CAT scans can be frightening because of the confined space, which is more anxiety-provoking if unexpected. Bad experiences may be remembered, and the procedure may be particularly traumatising because patients often do not have a support person with them.

