

MOA Networking Event: Privacy and Confidentiality
A Real-Life Scenario

A female patient comes into the office for her regularly scheduled Pap exam. She arrives with her 11-year-old son and two younger children. The family is originally from Iran. You know the mother speaks some basic English, but sometimes relies on the 11-year-old child to interpret for her.

As the family arrives, you see the mother and another patient in the waiting room share a greeting in their language. When the mother approaches the desk to register for her appointment she says she another issue she wants to talk to the doctor about. You ask for the 11-year-old to come forward as this has been the practice in the past. The mother abruptly says “No no no!” It is clear that the mother does not want the child to interpret this issue for her on this occasion.

You try to continue to understand what issue the mother wants. The information is not forthcoming and you cannot tell if it is because she is embarrassed or just does not have the vocabulary. In the background you can see the other patient who shares the mother’s language watching the exchange with interest.

What are some of the privacy and confidentiality issues?

How could you proceed?
