Translation guidelines

At the very minimum, two independent translators need to separately translate the questionnaire from English into the alternative language. These two translators then discuss their translations and agree on a single translation in the alternate language.

A third and fourth translator are then asked to independently back-translate the alternate language version into English.

At this stage the back-translations need to be reviewed by the copyright holders in Cardiff. Nearly always small problems become apparent and it is necessary for further changes to be made in the alternative language translation. This then needs to be validated by a further process of back-translation. Advice on this process can be gained either from Professor Finlay or colleague at the Dermatology Department in Cardiff.

Finally the agreed translation should be pretested in a group of potential subjects in a process called cognitive debriefing.

Cognitive debriefing
In summary, you enrol a small number of patients (e.g. 5 to 8) representing the population that would be completing the questionnaire. Ask them to complete the questionnaire, note the time needed to complete, ask them about the clarity, understandability, wording of the questions, is there any question that might need changing the wording and whether the questions are easily comprehensible, or whether any question is not clear enough. Ask the same about the response categories. If a subject raises any issues with the wording or the format of the questions, ask them their opinion on how to improve this. You have to do this for every single question one by one.

There is no need for a control population, but the patients in the cognitive debriefing group should be representative of the population in whom the questionnaire will eventually be used.

We usually require a final report before approving the final version of the translation to be used.

Copyright
Please note that the copyright for any translation is retained by the original copyright holders and is not transferred or shared with any additional copyright holders even though they may have been involved in the translation. The original or translated copyright statement must be reproduced at the end of every copy of the questionnaire.

Summary
Steps involved in the whole process of translation and linguist validation include:

- Preparation
- Forward Translation
- Reconciliation
• Back Translation
• Back Translation Review
• Harmonisation
• Pilot Testing/Cognitive Debriefing
• Review of Cognitive Debriefing Results and Finalisation
• Final Report

Once the final translation is approved by Prof Finlay or colleague from the Cardiff team, the translation is placed on the website so that others may also have access to it and to discourage unofficial translations which may be of lower quality.