

Screening Practices and Factors Influencing Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Screening by Community Paediatricians



Background

- Prevalence of ASD? Estimated at 1 in 68 children among 8 year olds based on American surveillance data (CDC).
- At what age can ASD be diagnosed? ASD can be accurately diagnosed in children 2 to 3 years old and high risk children can be identified earlier than 24 months (Moore 2003, Turner 2006).
- At what age is ASD diagnosed? Canadian data shows a median age at diagnosis of 39 to 55 months, far beyond the 24 months age at which we are able to diagnose ASD (Oullette-Kuntz 2009).
- Role of screening? Screening plays a role in early identification of children with ASD potentially leading to earlier intervention. Early intervention can have significant benefits on outcomes. (Anagnostou 2014).
- What do we know? Despite advances in diagnosis of ASD, data on general paediatric practice regarding ASD screening in Canada is lacking.

Objective

Examine the use of ASD screening tools and developmental screening tools as well as the facilitators and barriers to ASD screening by community paediatricians



Project Team

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Programs

- Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital,
- Bloorview Research Institute,
- University of Toronto,
- The Hospital for Sick Children
- Centre for Leadership (CfL)

Community doctors want to help in screening of autism spectrum disorder but need education and tools to do so



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Methods

- Cross sectional survey of community paediatricians based on previous survey and qualitative data (dosReis 2006, Ip 2015).
- Survey reviewed by community and developmental paediatricians, piloted to 30 community paediatricians and distributed to 560 paediatricians.
- Descriptive statistics was used to describe the survey responses.



Key Message

1. The majority of paediatricians use ASD screening tools when there are specific concerns. Opinions are divided regarding universal screening.
2. Time to do screening and the ability to navigate ASD resources are important barriers for paediatricians.
3. Most paediatricians are interested in incorporating formal ASD screening tools in their practice and would like clearer guidelines as to when and how to screen for ASD.



Next Steps

- Future projects and research can target the potential educational and resource gaps as well as guide development of programs and policies that are in line with physician and community needs.



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