

Autism Screener for Young Children

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Technology description

Invention Summary:

Effective screening during the toddler period may lead to timely detection of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The Autism Screener for Young Children is a Psychological Development Questionnaire. It is a brief parent-report questionnaire designed to represent the expression of social attention, communication and reciprocity in young children and inversely to detect children at-risk for ASD.

Details:

Researchers at Rutgers University have created a screening instrument comprised of a ten-item parent-report questionnaire. Parents, medical or educational personnel answer questions about a child's development on a 3-point (0-2) scale and the weighted answers are summed to yield a total score. The questionnaire can be self-administered or administered verbally AND scored in less than five minutes. A total score less than or equal to 12 represents possible deficits consistent with ASD. Scores of 13 to 15 are considered borderline, and scores greater than 16 reflect appropriate levels of early psychological development.

A pilot study of the screening instrument showed it was concordant with established (gold-standard) autism tests and had good retest reliability.

The screening instrument has been shown to be effective. It was tested via study through 16 cooperating pediatric programs in Essex and Union Counties in New Jersey. Two thousand children in the 18-36 month age range participated and the instrument determined 22 children with ASD.

Administering the screener when the same children were 48 months or older resulted in 26 children diagnosed with ASD, including the original 22.

Application area

Clinical setting such as doctor offices

Educational settings, teachers, school nurses, school psychologists

Parents

Advantages

Easy and quick to administer, complete and score

Requires no training to obtain an assessment

Does not require follow-up interviews to rule-out false positives
Simple scoring to determine a single ASD risk threshold score

Institution

[Rutgers University](#)

Inventors

[Walter Zahorodny](#)

Pediatrics

联系我们



叶先生

电话 : 021-65679356

手机 : 13414935137

邮箱 : yeyingsheng@zf-ym.com