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M-CHAT Implementation Strategies to Improve Autism Screening Rates in Pediatric Clinics in Metro Detroit

Karamoja Monchamp
Wayne State University School of Medicine, hk4846@wayne.edu

Title:

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Abstract:

The Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT) is the most widely used autism screening tool. However, current practices for M-CHAT roll-outs and follow-ups are not wide-reaching, culturally sensitive, or consistent. This study aims to address the existing barriers to universal autism screenings and design a sustainable implementation strategy for a successful M-CHAT roll-out. We implemented strategies in five Henry Ford Health pediatric clinics, incorporating iPad-administered M-CHAT in waiting rooms, multilingual options, task shifting for referrals, forced choice mechanisms, and audit-and-feedback support. A Clinical Screening Dashboard tracked real-time M-CHAT data, including demographic information, collected from EPIC. Our goal is to reach a 95% universal screening rate for autism and an 80% eligible referral rate to the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities (CADD) at the five Henry Ford Health pediatric clinics. Although early in the data collection process, the implementation strategies aimed at increasing screening rates show promising outcomes. We anticipate that our study will demonstrate a successful model for improving accessibility, accuracy, and equity in ASD screenings. Despite limitations such as language constraints and potential workload increases in Early Intervention Programs, we hope these implementation strategies can be applied across more Henry Ford Health Pediatric Clinics as well as be used as a model for other health systems.

Keywords:

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), M-CHAT, Access barriers, Equity, Pediatric screenings, Healthcare automation, Implementation science