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Assessing Accessibility and Equity of Autism Spectrum Disorder Screening Tools

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Introduction: Disparities to accessing autism spectrum disorder (ASD) screening tools have been demonstrated across race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and language. Additionally, there are concerns that existing screening tools are not as accurate for minoritized individuals. Thus, it is likely that level 1 screening tools must be adapted and developed for, and with, marginalized populations in the United States to promote increased levels of universal screening access and accuracy among minoritized populations.

Methods: Using the PRISMA scoping review checklist, an initial search produced 1880 unique records. Following title and abstract review, 35 articles met criteria for full manuscript review. Finally, 7 articles met criteria for chart review. Inclusion criteria included: 1) original peer-reviewed research study, 2) level 1-behavioral screener; 3) for ASD; 4) must be either an adaptation or creation for a diverse population; and 5) research must have taken place in the United States.

Results: Seven studies met full inclusion criteria. Preliminary data demonstrates multiple translations, into Spanish and Nepali, as well as the development of a pictorial-based screening tool, the Developmental Check-In (DCI). Adaptations and creations target language, parent education and literacy level.

Conclusions: Preliminary conclusions demonstrate a paucity of level 1, ASD-specific, screening tools adapted or developed with or for marginalized populations in the United States – despite the demonstrated need for these tools. We conclude that more research in this area is necessary to address known barriers to access and accuracy of current level 1 screening tools for autism for the diverse population within the United States.