

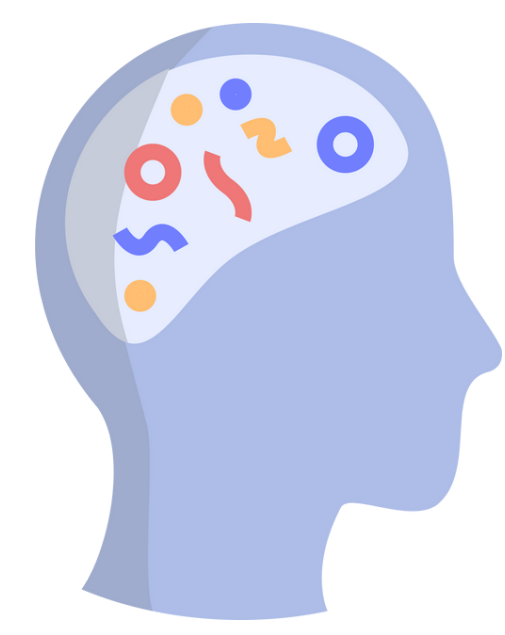
Assessing Facilitators and Barriers to Pediatric Autism Assessment Using an Implementation Science Framework

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Background



Autism = neuro-developmental condition, **early diagnosis** is key for care

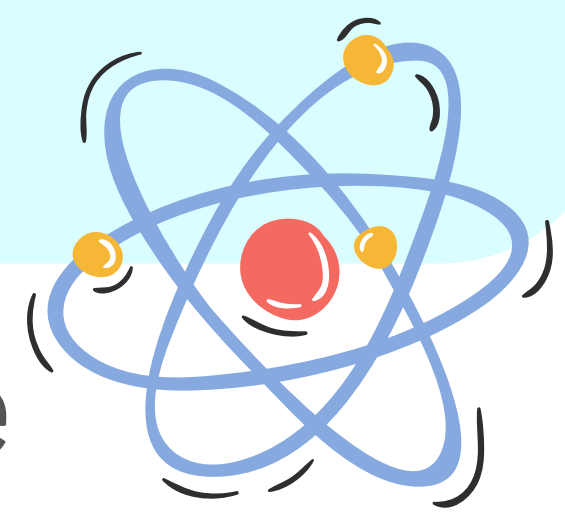


Feelings and frustration around care explored, **lack of implementation science framework** lens to autism assessment



Objective

Use an **implementation science framework** to assess **diagnostic barriers and facilitators** pediatricians across Ontario face to help **facilitate appropriate strategies**



Method

Seven community general pediatricians (six women; one man) with a range of years in practice and autism-specific training participated across three **focus group/dyad interviews** in Ontario

Transcripts coded and analyzed using **Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF)**



Themes for diagnostic facilitators and barriers identified via **deductive thematic analysis** through NVivo



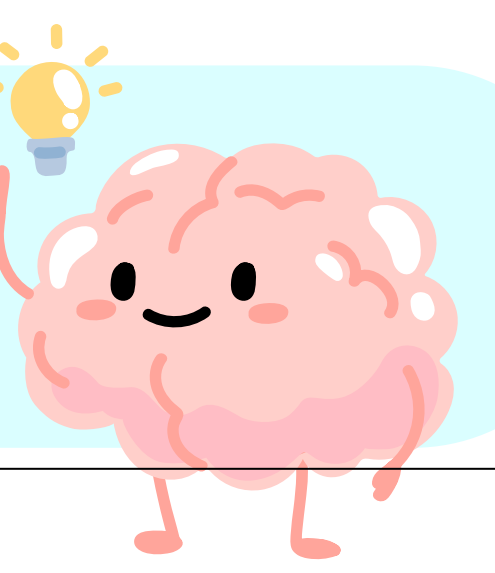
Pediatricians identified their knowledge and skills to diagnose autism while also noting many contextual barriers to this work

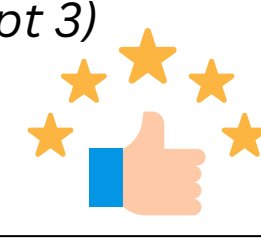

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Preliminary Results



Key TDF Domains	Key Constructs	Examples
Knowledge	Knowledge; procedural knowledge; knowledge of task environment	Facilitator: "So I think foundational to all of it is a very clear understanding of what the criteria are..." (Transcript 3) [Construct: Knowledge] 
Skills	Skills; competence; interpersonal skills	Facilitator: "... I think as a skill base, one has to be able to have the comfort to look at developmental abilities in general, to look at intellect and then also to factor in the mental health and that's a huge skill set if you're gonna diagnose autism across the ages." (Transcript 1) [Construct: Competence]
Memory, attention, and decision process	Memory; attention; decision making	Barrier: "The extremes of age are tough. So if they're really young, and I tend to be judicious, like I say that like this is a lifelong diagnosis. I really want to be sure..." (Transcript 1) [Construct: Decision making] 
Environmental context and resources	Environmental stressors; resources/material resources; barriers and facilitators	Barrier: "Well, and even in families sometimes where they're maybe not inclined to want to diagnose this or not ready for that, I would again love to be able to access the service but not feel that pull that we need that diagnosis to do that, right? So having a more collaborative approach, we could say, listen, we can do some early intervention, we don't have to agree on that part just yet, but let's do some early intervention..." (Transcript 3) [Construct: Environmental stressors]

Facilitators: supportive networks, experience, interest, high confidence, increased exposure to assessment
Barriers: inflexible policies, shared frustration, burnout, lack of resources, and poorly paid/unpaid labour

Conclusion

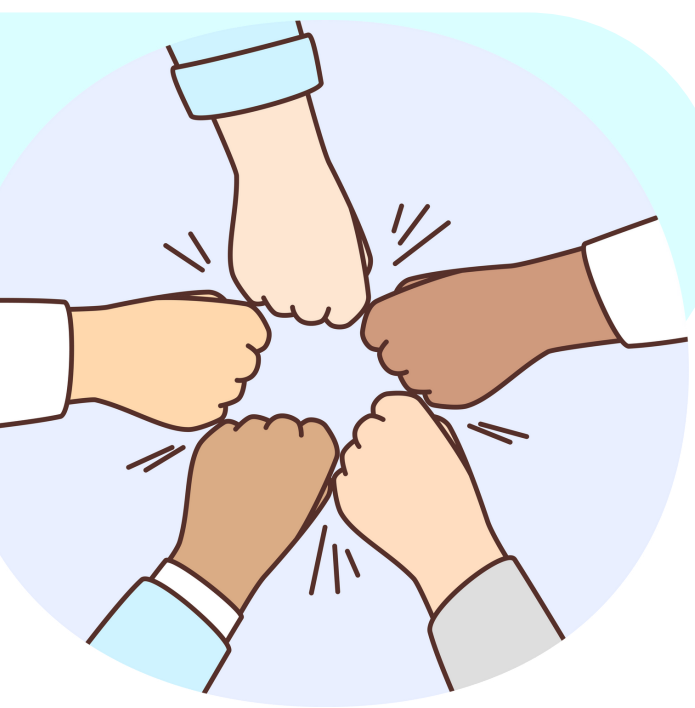


Remaining **analysis and thematic map** are underway for Ontario data



Final results to include **multi-provincial data** for diagnostic facilitators and barriers

Next Steps



Influences policy makers and clinicians **implement changes**



Development of **toolkits** helps clinicians



Conduct and analyze other site/provincial interviews to identify **across-site and site-specific needs** for autism assessment and ongoing integrated care

Relevance



Influences necessary **policy changes**, toolkits will encourage **more assessments**



Ultimately improves **early diagnosis and resource access** for families and autistic youth