

Synthesizing Best Practices for Community-Based Autism Diagnosis within Project ECHO AuDIO

Pamela Ye^{1,3}, Genevieve Ferguson¹, Salina Eldon¹, Lisa Kanigsberg¹, Melanie Penner^{1,2}
¹Bloorview Research Institute, ²University of Toronto, ³Queen's University

Background

Growing demand for **autism diagnosis** and **limited specialist capacity** have increased the need for diagnostic care in **community settings**.¹

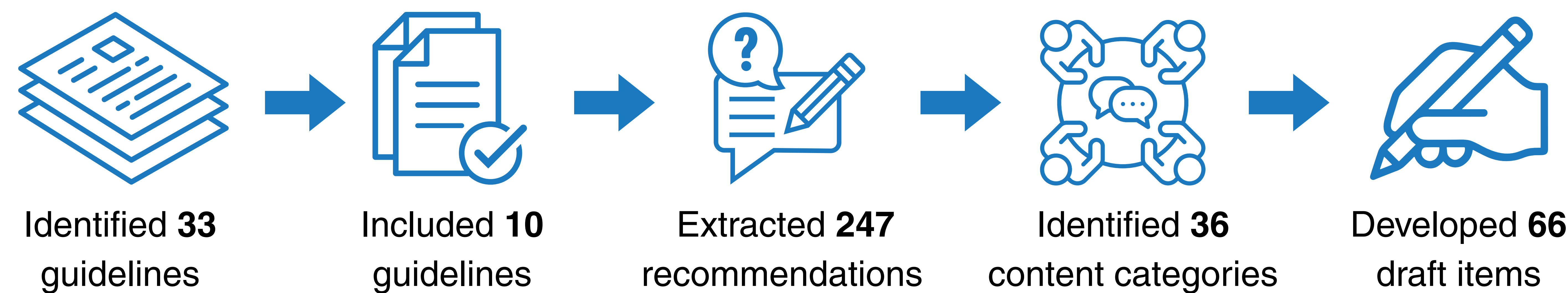
Project ECHO AuDIO aims to support **community health care professionals (HCPs)** by developing **practical, evidence-informed resources** for autism diagnostic care.

Existing autism diagnostic guidelines vary in scope and context.²

- Their recommendations must be synthesized into a **clear and actionable set of best practices**.

Objective: To synthesize recommendations from international autism diagnostic guidelines into candidate best-practice items for a modified Delphi survey on community-based diagnosis.

Methods



Results

Content Category	Synthesized Best-Practice Statement
Communication During the Assessment	“Throughout the assessment process, HCPs should check in with the family and child/youth to ensure their ongoing understanding and agreement.”
Oral Feedback of Assessment Results	“HCPs should explain what the assessment findings mean for the child/youth, including how autism may relate to their development, functioning, and support needs.”

Relevance to Holland Bloorview

Synthesizing best-practice recommendations supports the development of resources to help community HCPs provide **consistent, high-quality autism diagnostic care** for children/youth and families.

Ten international autism guidelines were synthesized into **66 best-practice statements**, with **communication during the assessment** and **oral feedback of assessment results** emerging as the most frequently represented recommendations.



Discussion

247 recommendations were synthesized into **66 best-practice statements**.

These statements provide a foundation for determining which practices are **most important** for community-based autism diagnosis.

Next Steps

1. Experts will rate the importance of each item through a **modified Delphi survey**.
2. Consensus items will inform **Project ECHO AuDIO toolkits** for community HCPs.

We thank the Ward Family for funding the summer student program and Katelyn Zeng for her assistance in developing the study methodology.

1. Penner, M., Anagnostou, E. & Ungar, W.J. Practice patterns and determinants of wait time for autism spectrum disorder diagnosis in Canada. *Molecular Autism*, 9, 16 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13229-018-0201-0>
2. Penner, M., Anagnostou, E., Andoni, L. Y., & Ungar, W. J. (2018). Systematic review of clinical guidance documents for autism spectrum disorder diagnostic assessment in select regions. *Autism: the international journal of research and practice*, 22(5), 517–527. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361316685879>