

# **A systematic review of screening tools for the detection of autism spectrum disorder in mainland China and surrounding regions**

**Ji Wang, Darren Hedley, Simon M Bury and Josephine Barbaro**

Screening tools are being developed to reliably and accurately identify Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in young children. This is an important step toward providing early intervention and support, and improving later outcomes. In this paper we reviewed articles published from 2015 that reported the use of autism screening tools in Chinese speaking countries. We aimed to determine which screening tools were being used and what their strengths and limitations might be. We then developed specific recommendations on how best to screen for autism in these countries. We identified 22 studies (13 in Chinese, 9 in English), two from Taiwan and the remainder from China. The studies differed in their methodologies and rate of reported autism prevalence, with the majority using DSM-IV or DSM-5 criteria (which were published by the American Psychiatric Association) to confirm diagnosis. Only a small number used “gold-standard” instruments to assess autism. From this review, it is recommended that a systematic screening network be established in China and surrounding regions, that functions across different community levels (e.g., schools, community groups, hospitals). It is also recommended that the screening tools and diagnosis be culturally appropriate, and accessible in areas with fewer resources. Finally, increasing the use of public awareness programs to reduce stigma will be important in improving outcomes for children with ASD.