

WG3 Testing how well screening instruments work in prospectively identifying cases

MC meeting Padua (19th 20th September 2011)

Minutes of the meeting

Summary of workplan

1. Mapping exercise:
The mapping exercise is to be completed for displaying at the COST-website. Method for completion: e-mail exchange. Collect relevant information from each study through PI's. the PI's can decide what level of detail they are prepared to display on the COST website (action workgroup leaders, Patricia, Guiomar and Rafa).
2. Paper: "important issues to address for researchers who are embarking on a screening study":
Which challenges need to be resolved in the process of initiating and executing a screening study? (Action: WG-leaders, Helen, Evald, Ricardo). Outline draft of paper: to be prepared by aforementioned group, and circulated to group members for input and comments. Timeline for the draft and full paper will be planned at the workgroup meeting in February 2012.
3. Possible collaboration between already performed screening studies by pooling data from different studies and comparing, if possible, performance of different screening instruments used at different ages and samples across Europe (STSM's Annika Hellendoorn, Patricia Garcia Primo).
May 2012: present first results.
Make a work plan for analyzing data and make a draft for a paper (Initiative: Emma, Annika, Patricia)
4. Mapping exercise of existing guidelines for early screening. The MC members from every country will be approached by WG3 leaders on how to collect the relevant information.
March 2012: mapping exercise.
May 2012: present first results. Group discussion on outline of such a mapping exercise. Each representative of a country needs to explore.
Seek funding for STSM for early autumn to provide compilation of information.
Autumn 2012: actual mapping exercise.

5. 2013: focus on larger cohort studies and highlight emerging symptoms and trajectories.

Discussion points:

The main focus of WG3 is to spread research based knowledge across different groups working in the field of early identification of very young children with autism in Europe. This goal can be achieved by pooling research information of different studies and make this accessible for a large group of people by using the COST website and by publishing in peer-reviewed journals. Clearly, the spreading of clinical expertise in this field is important, but as such not a main goal of this WG. Instead, WG3 can focus on the preparation and dissemination of research based knowledge conveyed by standardized guidelines.

During the mapping exercise diagnostic procedures across studies need to be clarified for different studies.

An alliance with WG4 is essential for achieving some of the goals.

The group has discussed the possibility for applying for funding for a Summer school in 2012, but a clear and strict focus was lacking.