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## Early Detection of Autism Spectrum Disorders in Malaysia using M-CHAT for Screening in Primary Care Setting

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**Introduction:** Early detection of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is important to ensure children are referred for interventions early leading to better long-term outcomes. A study on school age outcomes of children who received interventions before the age of 3 years and those with late diagnosis of ASD reported that cognitive and behavioral outcomes of children diagnosed early was better. Nurses in health clinics used the M-CHAT incorporated into the Child Health Record Book for screening. This was implemented nationwide in 2012 and after more than 5 years of implementation, it is time to evaluate the use of the tool.

**Objective:** To evaluate the outcome of implementing M-CHAT as a screening tool in primary care clinics.

**Methods:** Descriptive analysis of the trend for detection of cases suspected to be ASD using administrative data collected by the Family Health Development Division.

**Results:** Eighty percent of children aged 18 months were seen and screened in government health clinics. There was an increase in trend for detection of cases suspected with ASD from 1.47 per 1000 in 2015 to 3.26 per 1000 in 2018. Cases were seen by specialist and oncediagnosis was confirmed the children were given intervention. Similarly, cases screened for autism among children aged 3 years showed improvement from 1.5 to 2.79 per 1000 during the same period. In addition, data shows cases were being detected and confirmed earlier before school going age.

**Conclusion:** The use of M-CHAT as a screening tool in primary improved early detection of ASD.

**Keywords:** ASD, M-CHAT, screening, early detection, intervention

### Biography

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