

The importance of early detection and intervention



**Summary of results and proposals in the ASD
early detection, early intervention,
biomarkers and training**

Methods

- 5 Systematic reviews :
 - 14545 records screened → 224 papers with relevant information
- 29 Focus groups (FG)
 - 20 FG on early detection and diagnosis
 - 155 participants in 10 European countries
 - 9 FG on Early intervention
 - 71 participants in 9 European countries
- 2 Surveys aimed at families and professionals
 - 1237 Families participants in 26 countries
 - 795 Professionals participants in 26 countries

Early Detection of ASD

- 9 Different European countries:
 - Belgium, France, Netherlands, [Norway](#), UK, [Spain](#), Sweden (plus Finland and Italy)
- 7 Different Screening Tools
 - Based on identifying early social-communicative problems
 - CHAT, ESAT, [M-CHAT](#), CESDD, JA-OBS (plus Q-CHAT and BISTEA)
- Biomarkers, social and non-social signals could be used in future early population screening programmes
 - Opinions are divided among EU clinicians on the usefulness and feasibility of especially biomarkers,



Diagnosis

- Many families claim reduced waiting time for diagnosis
 - In most cases, parents identify the first signs of concern,
 - The average age at which the first concerns are identified is 25.28 months,
 - Diagnosis is not received until 44.37 months of age,
 - 68,8% of families indicated **delays of more than 6 months for a diagnosis.**
 - 44.8% of families reported that professionals informed them about the child's specific needs
 - But 20% of families informed that they did not receive any information at the time of the diagnosis.
- Families evaluated negatively the detection and diagnostic services

Early Intervention

- Most of the procedures used are based on studies carried out in USA.
- Most of treatment techniques are based on a combination of different methods (e.g., behavioural, naturalistic, pivotal response treatment).
- Children receive two to three treatment sessions per week
- Integrating caregivers to the intervention as active agents improve the effectiveness of the programmes
 - But 30% of the families report occasional active participation in treatment
- Parents insist on a negative appraisal of the current situation
 - Lack of resources,
 - Access problems by place of residence,
 - Lack of professionals
 - Insufficient training of professionals..



Main Recommendations

1. To support new initiatives on early detection in Europe
 - Involving health authorities clinicians and families in population screening programmes.
 - With procedures that include social and non-social signs, as well as biomarkers.
2. Diagnosis:
 - Less diagnosis delay, better coordination, support for families
3. Early Intervention
 - Should be available for every child as soon as possible
 - Well-trained professionals
 - Families must actively participate