**Title**: Characterizing Knowledge of Autism Services Among Families of Autistic Children from Low-Resourced Communities

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**Introduction**: Given the heterogeneous nature of autism1, autistic children often require personalized services to meet their unique needs. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children with autism receive educational, therapeutic, medical, and family support services from multiple service delivery systems. Yet, only 1/3 of parents of children with ASD are served by more than one service delivery system.3 This limited service receipt may be due to lack of parental knowledge. While there are measures of knowledge of school systems4, autism,5 and adult services,6 there are few measures of knowledge related to multiple service delivery systems. Such a measure is needed among families of 3–5 year olds with autism as they often do not receive all of their services from the school. Further, given the inequity in accessing services for families from low-resourced backgrounds (i.e., the mother has a high school diploma or less; the primary caregiver is unemployed; and/or the family receives governmental assistance7), it is important that a knowledge measure can be used with diverse populations. To these ends, the research questions for this study were: Among English and Spanish-speaking families of young children with autism from low-resourced backgrounds, (1) What is the reliability and validity of the Knowledge of Autism Services measure?; (2) Which aspects of knowledge of autism services are strengths and challenges for families?

**Method**: There were 66 participants in this study; participants were part of a randomized controlled trial about the effectiveness of a navigator program in improving service access. Only baseline data were included in this dataset. All participants met the following inclusionary criteria: (1) had a 3–5-year-old child who received an autism diagnosis from a healthcare provider; (2) met the criteria for being from a low-resourced community7; (3) spoke English or Spanish; and (4) lived within the urban area wherein the study was conducted. Altogether, 12 participants completed the measure in Spanish while the remainder completed the measure in English. More than 75% of the sample reported annual household incomes below $50,000; the majority (>79%) of the sample reported having boys with autism. The Knowledge of Autism Services measure was developed based on extant knowledge measures.2,6 An advisory council of parents of autistic children, faculty, and practitioners reviewed the measure and provided feedback. The measure included 15 multiple choice questions about autism services including: autistic traits; governmental services (e.g., Medicaid waivers); school services (e.g., evaluations); health services (e.g., health insurance); and advocacy strategies. Each question had four response options; only one option was correct. To test its reliability and validity, we conducted a factor analysis and Cronbach’s alpha of the measure. To examine strengths and challenges, we conducted McNemar’s tests to determine which items were more or less difficult for participants.

**Results**: The factor analysis revealed six unique factors which explained 63.40% of the variance. Specifically, individual factors included: knowledge of autism; school services; community services; governmental services; health services; and advocacy strategies. Each factor had a high Cronbach’s alpha (>.80) indicating high reliability. Participants especially struggled to answer questions about school services, governmental services, and health services compared to basic knowledge about autism and advocacy strategies (*p*’s < .05).

**Discussion:** Given that knowledge is important in predicting greater parent advocacy2, it is critical to improve knowledge among parents of autistic children. The Knowledge of Autism Services can be a valid and reliable way to gauge parental knowledge about autism services across a range of systems. The results also suggest that parent education programs may need to focus their content on educational, governmental, and health services (compared to basic knowledge about autistic traits and advocacy skills).

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