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Comparing the evidence and "lessons learned" with developmental and social-emotional screening between Scandinavia and the USA

Objectives: What are the "lessons learned" and research opportunities to improve the early identification of developmental-behavioral delays and at-risk conditions using the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and ASQ:Social-Emotional (ASQ:SE) in Scandinavian and United States (US) populations?

Methods: A comparative review was performed investigating the use of the ASQ and ASQ:SE in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and US. Selection criteria included peer-viewed literature over the past 20 years in the birth-through-five-year age group.

Results: Danish and Norwegian translations of the ASQ and ASQ:SE have not been normed on large, representative samples. The Norwegian translation is out-of-date. A Swedish translation is nonexistent. Danish studies show promise for using the ASQ and ASQ:SE at home visit and preschool settings. In US medical settings, periodically administering the ASQ and ASQ:SE has been proven to be feasible, and dramatically improves early detection and intervention rates. In Scandinavia and the US, there is insufficient evidence that screening improves outcomes over time.

Conclusions: US studies highlight many practical lessons about implementing the ASQ and ASQ:SE. In Scandinavia, research opportunities exist to improve early detection rates with universal screening. Randomized controlled trials are needed to investigate outcomes in screened versus unscreened cohorts.