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Assessing the Accessibility and Integration of Community Resources for Autism in Sri Lanka

Bryce Eng

Thomas Jefferson University, bryce.eng@jefferson.edu

Krys Foster, MD, MPH

Thomas Jefferson University, Krys.foster@jefferson.edu

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Bryce Eng
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Assessing the Accessibility and Integration of Community Resources for Autism in Sri Lanka

Introduction: Similar to many other developing countries, Sri Lanka also has challenges meeting the needs of autistic individuals. While progress has been made in evaluating autism screening tools and home-based therapy, limited data exists on the utilization of community resources.

Objective: The objective of this study is to assess the accessibility and integration of community resources for autistic individuals in Sri Lanka. Questions to explore will center on how different sectors work with families and each other to address an autistic individual's needs.

Methods: Informal interviews were conducted with professionals who have direct experience working with individuals with autism and their families. The total sample size was ten interviewees. Interviews were conducted in English or in Sinhalese with assistance from a native speaker. Conversations were not recorded but notes at their permission were taken. Their responses were then categorized based upon shared themes and subthemes.

Results: The most frequently identified challenges to families' access to care centered around transportation and the sparsity of providers. Many interviewees discussed the extensive breadth

of services their respective organizations provided, the personalized plans individuals received, and the training of staff done internally.

Conclusion: As this is a pilot study with a low sample size, the investigators hesitate to make broad conclusions. However, due to lack of precedent in regard to autism research in Sri Lanka, the investigators hope the noted themes will hopefully point future studies in directions that yield more concrete findings. Next steps should involve including families in the study and expanding the sample size to gain parents' perspective.