



Title: Consensus Research Priorities for Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics: A DBPNet Delphi Study

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Background: Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics (DBP) is a relatively young subspecialty with many questions related to the most effective and efficient diagnostic and management strategies. The Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics Research Network (DBPNet) is a collaboration among 12 academic DBP programs including 95 developmental-behavioral pediatricians and the Society for Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics (SDBP) that was launched in September 2010 in order to facilitate investigation of these research questions. With many potential questions there is a need to identify the high priority questions.

Objective: To develop a consensus regarding the most important research questions for the field of DBP.

Design/Methods: Individuals from three stakeholder groups, 27 developmental-behavioral pediatricians, 16 psychologists, and 12 parents, participated in a 3-round Delphi survey. Participation was 100% in Rounds I and III and 96% in Round II. In Round I, each participant suggested up to 10 research questions important for DBP to address in the next 5 years. In Round II, participants rated the importance of each unique question on a 9-point likert scale. Questions were rated as consensus important questions if they had a median score of 7 and a coefficient of variation (CV) ≤ 30 indicating low variation in scores (high agreement). Questions were rated as potentially important if they had a median of 7, but a CV > 30 or if specific stakeholder group ratings suggested they were important. After providing participants the results from Round II, potentially important questions were rated a second time (Round III), and responses were evaluated using the same criteria as in Round II.

Results: In Round I, 216 unique research questions were identified. In Round II, 29 of these questions met the criteria for a consensus important question and 60 questions were rated as potentially important. In Round III, ten additional questions were rated as meeting the criteria for a consensus important question. Of the 39 consensus important research questions, 20 were efficacy, effectiveness, or comparative effectiveness studies; 8 related to epidemiology or analysis of risk factors; 5 related to assessing or developing methods to assess outcomes. The other six questions related to issues such as screening, diagnostic testing, identifying practice variation across DBP sites, and teaching DBP to DBPNet is supported by cooperative agreement UA3MC20218 from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.



residents. Approximately 40% of the questions related to autism spectrum disorders. Although the Delphi procedure developed a consensus around most questions, there were 7 in which 75% or more of parent participants rated the question as important, but the question did not reach consensus criteria. No other question that failed to reach consensus criteria was rated as important by more than 70% of a stakeholder group.

Conclusions: This Delphi process has produced a set of high priority research topics for the field of DBP. These topics cover a broad range of DBP concerns, but focus on evaluating interventions and studying autism. Parents of children with disabilities prioritize some research topics that were not prioritized by most developmental-behavioral pediatricians or psychologists.

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