

Children with Special Health Care Needs Screener[®]

FAST FACTS

DESCRIPTION

- The CSHCN Screener[®] is a five item, parent-reported tool designed to reflect the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau's consequences-based definition of children with special health care needs.
- The CSHCN Screener[®] identifies children across the range and diversity of childhood chronic conditions and special needs – allowing a more comprehensive and robust assessment their needs and health care system performance than is attainable by focusing on a single diagnosis or type of special need.
- The screener responds to the need for an efficient, standardized and non-condition specific method for identifying CSHCN in populations and for quality assessment purposes. It takes about 1 minute to complete.

HOW ARE CHILDREN IDENTIFIED BY THE CSHCN SCREENER[®]?

- The CSHCN Screener[®] identifies children who currently experience one or more of five common health consequences due to a physical, mental, behavioral or other type of health condition lasting or expected to last at least 12 months.
- To meet the CSHCN Screener[®] criteria a child's parent must report the child has an ongoing health condition for which he/she experiences one or more of the following: (1) need or use of prescription medications; (2) an above routine use of services; (3) need or use of specialized therapies or services; (4) need or use of mental health counseling (5) a functional limitation. Most children identified experience more than one consequence.
- Based on analysis of nearly 500,000 cases of screener data, nearly all parents whose children meet the CSHCN Screener[®] criteria do name a specific chronic condition diagnosis on a short check-list of common childhood chronic conditions. However, some children have parents who name a specific diagnosis but do not report the child experiences health or health services need consequences due to the condition.

WHY USE A NON-CONDITION SPECIFIC APPROACH?

- Children with ongoing health conditions share in common many health-related needs and issues. In addition, they often experience more than one condition at a time. Focusing on single conditions is both limiting and often impractical due to the large number of relatively low prevalence childhood chronic conditions.
- The large number of different childhood chronic conditions also means that developing a condition checklist comprehensive enough to capture all cases is not feasible. Such check-lists are also unreliable sources for many of the diagnoses included in a condition list. Relying upon diagnosis codes in medical records is not an option for population-based surveys and many other applications.
- It is not uncommon for CSHCN to experience health consequences for an extended period but not yet have a formal diagnosis because their doctors are still working to understand the particular health issues involved; or because the child does not have proper access to quality health care where diagnosis is possible.

WHAT SURVEYS INCLUDE THE CSHCN SCREENER[®]?

- The CSHCN Screener[®] is currently used in the National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs (NS-CSHCN), the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), and the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS). The CSHCN Screener[®] is also a part of the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers (CAHPS[®]) Children with Chronic Conditions survey.

HOW CAN I OBTAIN A COPY OF THE CSHCN SCREENER[®]?

The CSHCN Screener[®] is available at no charge. Supporting materials, scoring programs and technical documentation can be found at www.cahmi.org. English and Spanish language versions of the CSHCN Screener[®] as well as adolescent and adult self-report versions are also available.