

Objective:

To identify suicide screening instruments evaluated in neurodivergent populations – particularly autistic adults – to inform future adaptation and validation for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Background:

- Adults with IDD are at increased risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors.
- Currently, no validated suicide screening tool exists specifically for this population.
- Common instruments (e.g., Ask Suicide-Screening Questions [ASQ], Suicidal Behaviors Questionnaire-Revised [SBQ-R]) demonstrate clinical utility but are not well adapted for individuals with neurodevelopmental differences.

Methods:

- A systematic literature search was conducted to identify suicide screening tools in neurodivergent populations.
- A total of 1,268 abstracts were identified and screened using *Rayyan* in blinded mode.
- Sixteen articles underwent full-text review, of which six met final inclusion criteria and were included in data extraction.

Results:

- Screening tools evaluated across studies are summarized in **Table 1**; all identified instruments were freely available.
- Several tools incorporated adaptations based on input from individuals with ASD, including simplified language and visual aids.
- Tools most adaptable to IDD populations are:
 - ASQ as it is brief and already administered in pediatric and neurodivergent populations
 - SIDAS-M as it is brief and focuses on severity of ideation
 - Suicide Assessment Kit because it is already modified for populations with ASD and it using simplified language
- Many studies included structured protocols for managing positive suicide ideation (SI) screens, offering important guidance for safety procedures in future research and clinical settings.

Table 1. Summary of Tools Analyzed n Included Articles

Tool	Free?	# of ?s	Primary Purpose
AASP	Yes	60	Development of safety planning for self-harm risk
INQ-10 / ACSS-FAD	Yes	10/7	Assessment of suicide risk factors (e.g., belongingness, capability)
SIDAS-M	Yes	5	Measurement of suicidal ideation severity
ASQ / SITBI-SR	Yes	5/72	Screening of suicidal thoughts and behaviors
Suicide Assessment Kit	Yes	11	ASD-specific assessment of suicidal ideation

Discussion:

- Existing suicide screening tools are **accessible and freely available**, with several already incorporating **ASD-informed adaptations** (e.g., simplified language, visual supports), suggesting feasibility for further adaptation to IDD populations.
- Despite these strengths, tools remain **insufficiently validated and not fully generalizable** to individuals with IDD, highlighting a critical gap in clinical risk assessment.
- **Structured follow-up remains essential** – screening tools should be used as part of a multi-step approach that includes clinical interview and safety planning.
- Importantly, many studies included **protocols for managing positive suicide ideation (SI) screens**, providing a foundation for developing standardized safety procedures in future research and clinical care for neurodivergent populations.
- COSMIN guidelines will provide more information regarding risk of bias of each survey

Future Directions:

- Larger validation studies inclusive of neurodivergent populations
- Longitudinal research examining predictive validity
- Development of hybrid screening approaches (e.g., digital/AI-assisted tools)
- Evaluation of real-world clinical outcomes
- Evaluation using COSMIN guidelines

Limitations:

- Heterogeneity in study design and reporting
- Limited generalizability due to mostly English-speaking samples
- Small number of included studies

References:

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