

# Do supports and barriers to routine clinical assessment for children with cerebral palsy change over time? A mixed methods study

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**Aim:** To investigate changes over time in allied health professional's (AHP) perceptions of supports and barriers to implementing routine clinical assessment for children with cerebral palsy.

**Method:** Occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech pathologists employed in five organisations completed the Supports and Barriers Questionnaire<sup>1</sup> (SBQ) and participated in focus groups at baseline, 6, 12 and 24 months following introduction of routine clinical assessment procedures. Quantitative data were analysed descriptively. Baseline qualitative data were analysed inductively and a thematic framework developed<sup>2</sup>. This framework was applied longitudinally using a constant comparative approach.

**Results:** 447 AHP participated (baseline n=227, 6m n=227; 12m n=224; 24m n=189). SBQ ratings remained positive over time indicating that overall AHP felt supported in implementing routine assessment. Five themes emerged at baseline (Figure 1). Longitudinally, themes demonstrated how routine assessment practices and clinical expertise were embedded and maintained. Critical reflection on the utility and costs of routine assessment was evident over time, attributable in part to national changes in funding of disability services.

**Significance of the findings:** Organisational commitment, adequate resourcing and effective communication are required to implement and embed change in AHP services.

**References:** <sup>1</sup>Rivard et al, 2010; <sup>2</sup>Kerr et al, 2016      **Contact :** christine.imms@acu.edu.au

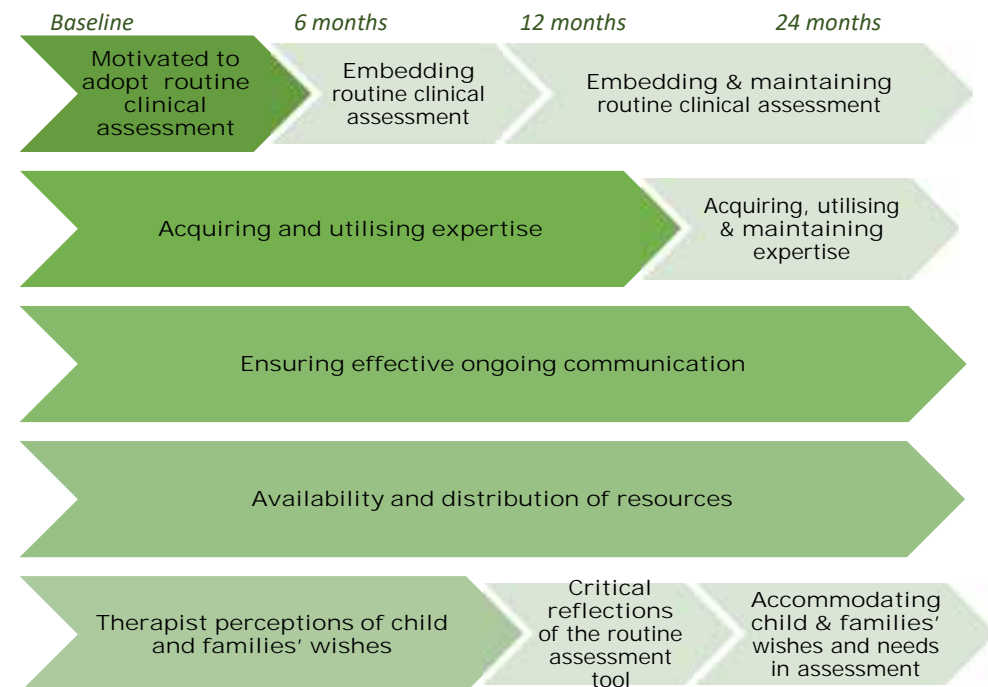


Figure 1: Evolution of qualitative themes over time

