

"Results of 2017-2019 screening of self-concept among children 6-12 years old at the three largest CF centers in Sweden"

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Objectives: International mental health guidelines highlight the importance of annual psychological screening of CF patients from the age of 12. In Swedish CF care, systematic clinical screening regarding self-concept in children 6–12 yrs with the use of the “I think I am” questionnaire (ITIA) (Birgerstam, 2013) was implemented in 2016. Data was routinely collected in the Swedish national CF registry. Psychological registry data from the three largest Swedish CF centres will be presented.

Methods: From year 2017 to 2019, patients 6–12 years attending three CF centres in Sweden were asked to complete the ITIA-questionnaire at the time of their annual review. Depending on the CF centre the screening was made with an interval of one to three years. The results were listed in the national CF registry. After review, a clinical action plan was made for patients with low scores.

Results: Out of the eligible 68 patients who met a psychologist at their annual review 2017–2019, 53 (78%, age 5.6–12.8 of which 51% were girls) completed the ITIA with minimum interference from their parents. For those with multiple screening the latest data was chosen. The ITIA stanine scores ranged from 1 to 9 with a median of 5. No significant differences were found when comparing gender or age. 26 (49%) of the patients reported normal/good self-esteem (stanine 4–6). 12 (23%) reported high self-esteem (stanine 7–9) and 15 (28%) of the patients reported low self-esteem (stanine 1–3).

Conclusion: Although international guidelines recommend mental health screening from the age of 12, screening of self-concept is here shown to be a useful method to identify early need of support for patients from the age of 6. The clinical experience is that screening of young children boosts their self-awareness and highlights multiple aspects of identity and psychological development. Mental health screening of younger children has become a useful part of routine care in three out of four CF centres.