Never the twain shall meet?
Staff and patient attitudes and actions on hospital-based alcohol screening and brief intervention

Imogen Davies, Health Service Planner, SMHS
## Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test – Consumption (AUDIT-C)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Scoring system</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monthly or less</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 – 4 times per month</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 – 3 times per week</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4+ times per week</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many standard drinks of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?</td>
<td>1 – 2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 – 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 – 6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 – 9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you have 5 or more drinks on one occasion?</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than monthly</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily or almost daily</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Risk Rating

- **LOW**
  - Scores: 0 - 4
  - Males: 0 - 4, Females: 0 - 3
- **MODERATE**
  - Scores: 5 - 8
  - Males: 5 - 8, Females: 4 - 7
- **HIGH**
  - Scores: 9+
  - Males: 9+, Females: 8+

### Brief Intervention completed? (turn over for script)

- **Y □ N □**

### Consult Requests (to be completed all hours)

- Alcohol and Other Drug CNC □
Intervention model

- **Low**
  - Reinforcement
  - No further action

- **Moderate**
  - Brief intervention
  - GP notification *

- **High**
  - Brief intervention
  - Referral to AOD CNC
  - GP notification *

* GP notification is randomised (letter / no letter)
Challenge

- Staff concerns regarding GP notification:
  - Clinical
    - Relevance to presentation
    - Context
  - Medico-legal
    - Consent
    - Longevity of record
Patient survey
Patient cohort surveyed

- **Low risk**: 36
- **Moderate risk**: 24
- **High risk**: 20
Do you think it's a good idea to ask patients about their alcohol use in ED?

- **Yes**: 100%
  - Low risk: 100%
  - Moderate risk: 88%
  - High Risk: 80%

- **No**: 0%
  - Low risk: 0%
  - Moderate risk: 12%
  - High Risk: 20%
For moderate / high risk drinking, do you think it would be useful/appropriate to share the results with the patient’s GP, along with all the other discharge information?

- Yes: 86% Low risk, 79% Moderate risk, 85% High risk
- No: 14% Low risk, 21% Moderate risk, 15% High risk
Staff survey
Staff cohort surveyed

- Consultant: 13
- Registrar: 11
- RMO - Intern: 18
- Nurses: 50
[Prior to AUDIT-C introduction], how often did you ask patients about their alcohol use?

- **Nurses**
  - Never: 12
  - Rarely: 32
  - Sometimes: 40
  - Often: 14
  - Always: 2

- **RMO - Intern**
  - Never: 6
  - Rarely: 50
  - Sometimes: 44

- **Registrar**
  - Never: 27
  - Rarely: 18
  - Sometimes: 54

- **Consultant**
  - Never: 23
  - Rarely: 53
  - Sometimes: 8
How important do you find identifying alcohol misuse in the emergency department?

- Unimportant
- Of little importance
- Moderately important
- Important
- Very important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Of little importance</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMO - Intern</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>63</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How comfortable are you asking patients about their alcohol intake?

- v. uncomfortable
- uncomfortable
- unsure
- comfortable
- v. comfortable

Nurses
- 6 v. uncomfortable
- 16 uncomfortable
- 54 unsure
- 24 comfortable
- 24 v. comfortable

RMO - Intern
- 6 v. uncomfortable
- 44 uncomfortable
- 50 unsure
- 50 comfortable
- 10 v. comfortable

Registrar
- 90 v. uncomfortable
- 90 comfortable
- 90 v. comfortable

Consultant
- 53 v. uncomfortable
- 53 comfortable
- 53 v. comfortable
How likely are you to refer excessive alcohol use to the AOD clinical nurse consultant?

- **Nurses**
  - v. unlikely: 6
  - unlikely: 16
  - neutral: 36
  - likely: 42

- **RMO - Intern**
  - v. unlikely: 44
  - unlikely: 28
  - neutral: 17
  - likely: 11

- **Registrar**
  - v. unlikely: 27
  - unlikely: 64
  - neutral: 9

- **Consultant**
  - v. unlikely: 46
  - unlikely: 38
  - neutral: 15
Summary
Alcohol screening in an ED

- Patients are generally supportive
- Staff:
  - 90% are comfortable asking about alcohol
  - 68% describe alcohol screening as ‘important’ or ‘very important’
- Screening rates appear low
  - 43%
Sharing results with the GP

- Generally accepted
- Patient and staff concerns:
  - Clinical relevance and context
  - Consent
  - Judgement / stigma
Screening and brief intervention in an ED

- Broader social attitudes
- Other (non-health) policy instruments
- Health sector interdependencies
- Organisational systems and capacity
- Staff beliefs and attitudes
- Patient factors
Authors and Acknowledgements

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