

## **Screening for risky substance use in Emergency Department presentations: A pilot investigation of ASSIST-Lite to investigate the characteristics of substance users attending the Royal Adelaide Hospital**

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**Introduction and Aims:** Substance use is a common contributing factor to emergency department (ED) presentations. While screening and brief intervention (SBI) for alcohol and tobacco is often routine, SBI for illicit substances is uncommon. The ASSIST-Lite is a rapid screener for use in high-turnover settings. Like the ASSIST, the ASSIST-Lite screens for all classes of drugs, and is valid for self-completion. The aim of this study was to determine the substance use characteristics of individuals presenting to the ED.

**Method / Approach:** All ED attenders, aged 18 years or older, deemed well enough to participate were approached. Recruitment at the Royal Adelaide Hospital ED between May and June, 2017. Participants were asked to electronically self-complete the ASSIST-Lite in the ED waiting room. A total of 632 people were approached, of which 479 (75.8%) agreed to participate.

**Key Findings:** Alcohol (72%), tobacco (27%) and cannabis (15%) were the most commonly reported substances. Moderate-risky use was common, with 194 (40.5%) indicating moderate-risk for at least one substance. Of them, 130 (67.0%) reported moderate risk for a single substance. The remaining 105 individuals (21.9%) reported high-risk use for at least one substance. A multinomial logistic regression found age, gender and employment status significantly associated with increased levels of risky substance use.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** High rates of risky substance use were detected. Younger, unemployed males were more likely to report higher levels of risk. Participants found the ASSIST-Lite easy to use.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** In ED settings, routine targeted SBIRT should be considered. A dedicated AOD consultation liaison service should also be considered for referral among higher risk cases.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

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