

At one click: Australian Online Collection of alcohol and other drug screening and withdrawal tools

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Introduction / Issues: Screening is an important practice for systematically identifying at risk alcohol and other drug (AOD) use. Standardised tools are equally important for monitoring withdrawal. Until recently there has been no one online location for retrieving AOD screening and withdrawal tools commonly administered in Australian settings, whilst available tool descriptions have become dated.

Method / Approach: To identify commonly recommended tools we examined endorsed jurisdictional materials. This list was checked by AOD stakeholders. Electronic formats for each tool were located, with word and pdf formats created for hard-to-find instruments. Desktop reviews were conducted for all included tools to ascertain appropriate populations, diagnostics, utility, resources and knowledge gaps.

Key Findings: The online collection comprises 18 commonly recommended tools. Ten are screening (ASSIST, ASSIST-Lite, AUDIT, AUDIT-C, CAGE, DAST, DUDIT, FTND, IRIS and SDS); and eight are withdrawal tools (ACSA, AWQ, CWS, CIWA-aR, CWA-B, COWS, SOWS and OOWS). Eight tools have been validated with Australian populations (screening: n=6; withdrawal: n=2).

Discussions and Conclusions: For screening tools, better understanding the scope of implementation and tool utility are important next steps. Further research is required for withdrawal tools into content and construct validity in Australian settings.

Implications for Practice or Policy: The Online Collection is a useful sector-wide resource, comprising tools in various electronic formats, each with succinct overviews useful for practice and policy.

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