

Alcohol-use disorders overview

NICE Pathways bring together all NICE guidance, quality standards and other NICE information on a specific topic.

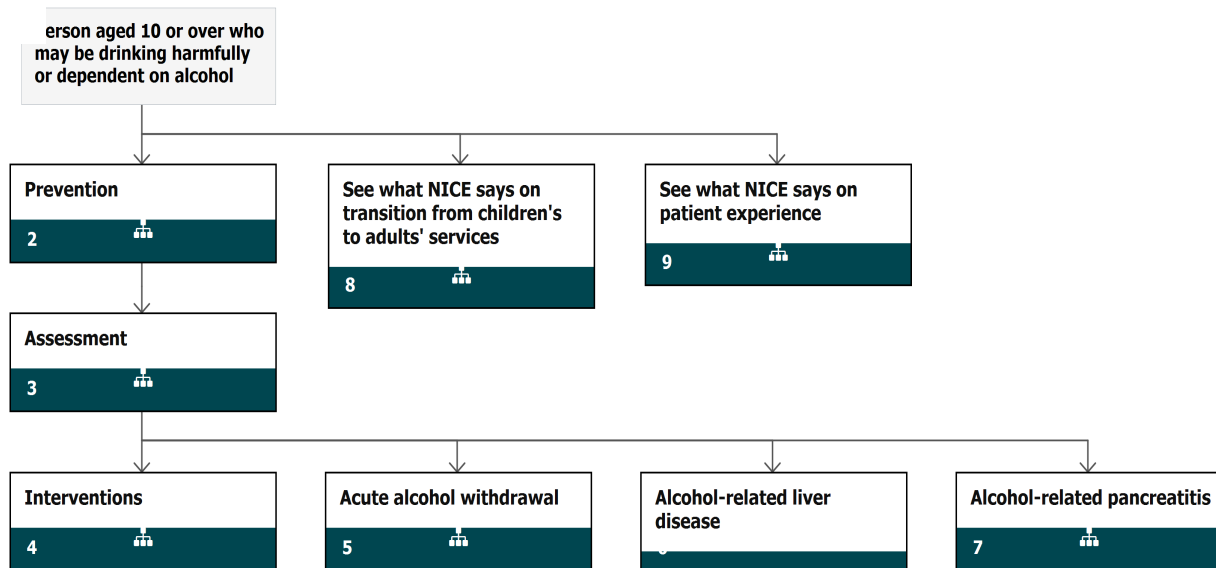
NICE Pathways are interactive and designed to be used online. They are updated regularly as new NICE guidance is published. To view the latest version of this pathway see:

<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/alcohol-use-disorders>

Pathway last updated: 11 April 2017

This document contains a single pathway diagram and uses numbering to link the boxes to the associated recommendations.

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1 Person aged 10 or over who may be drinking harmfully or dependent on alcohol

No additional information

2 Prevention

[See Alcohol-use disorders / Preventing alcohol-use disorders](#)

3 Assessment

[See Alcohol-use disorders / Assessment for harmful drinking and alcohol dependence](#)

4 Interventions

[See Alcohol-use disorders / Interventions for harmful drinking and alcohol dependence](#)

5 Acute alcohol withdrawal

[See Alcohol-use disorders / Acute alcohol withdrawal](#)

6 Alcohol-related liver disease

[See Alcohol-use disorders / Alcohol-related liver disease](#)

7 Alcohol-related pancreatitis

[See Alcohol-use disorders / Alcohol-related pancreatitis](#)

8 See what NICE says on transition from children's to adults' services

[See Transition from children's to adults' services](#)

9 See what NICE says on patient experience

[See Patient experience in adult NHS services](#)

ADI

adolescent diagnostic interview

Alcohol dependence

A cluster of behavioural, cognitive and physiological factors that typically include a strong desire to drink alcohol and difficulties in controlling its use. Someone who is alcohol-dependent may persist in drinking, despite harmful consequences. They will also give alcohol a higher priority than other activities and obligations. For further information please refer to: 'Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders' (DSM-IV) (American Psychiatric Association 2000) and 'International statistical classification of diseases and related health problems – 10th revision' (ICD-10) (World Health Organization 2007).

Alcohol treatment

a programme designed to reduce alcohol consumption or any related problems; it could involve a combination of counselling and medicinal solutions

Alcohol-related harm

Physical or mental harm caused either entirely or partly by alcohol. If it is entirely as a result of alcohol, it is known as 'alcohol-specific'. If it is only partly caused by alcohol it is described as 'alcohol-attributable'.

Alcohol-use disorders

Alcohol-use disorders cover a wide range of mental health problems as recognised within the international disease classification systems (ICD-10, DSM-IV). These include hazardous and harmful drinking and alcohol dependence.

CI

Confidence interval. There is always some uncertainty in research. This is because a small group of people is studied to predict the effects of an intervention on the wider population. The confidence interval is a way of expressing how certain we are about the findings from a study, using statistics. It gives a range of results that is likely to include the 'true' value for the population.

The CI is usually stated as '95% CI', which means that the range of values has a 95 in a 100 chance of including the 'true' value. For example, a study may state that 'based on our sample findings, we are 95% certain that the 'true' population blood pressure is not higher than 150 and not lower than 110'. In such a case the 95% CI would be 110 to 150.

A wide confidence interval indicates a lack of certainty about the true effect of the test or treatment – often because a small group of patients has been studied. A narrow confidence interval indicates a more precise estimate (for example, if a large number of patients have been studied).

APQ

alcohol problems questionnaire

ASA

Advertising Standards Authority

AUDIT

AUDIT is an alcohol screening test designed to see if people are drinking harmful or hazardous amounts of alcohol. It can also be used to identify people who warrant further diagnostic tests for alcohol dependence.

OR

Odds ratio. Odds are a way to represent how likely it is that something will happen (the probability). An odds ratio compares the probability of something in one group with the probability of the same thing in another.

An odds ratio of 1 between two groups would show that the probability of the event (for example a person developing a disease, or an intervention working) is the same for both.

Sometimes probability can be compared across more than two groups – in this case, one of the groups is chosen as the 'reference category', and the odds ratio is calculated for each group compared with the reference category. For example, to compare the risk of dying from lung cancer for non-smokers, occasional smokers and regular smokers, non-smokers could be used as the reference category. Odds ratios would be worked out for occasional smokers compared with non-smokers and for regular smokers compared with non-smokers.

BAC

blood alcohol concentration

Brief interventions

This can comprise either a short session of structured brief advice or a longer, more motivationally-based session (that is, an extended brief intervention). Both aim to help someone reduce their alcohol consumption (sometimes even to abstain) and can be carried out by non-alcohol specialists.

CIWA–Ar

The Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment – Alcohol, revised (CIWA–Ar) scale is a validated 10-item assessment tool that can be used to quantify the severity of the alcohol withdrawal syndrome, and to monitor and medicate patients throughout withdrawal.

RCT

Randomised controlled trial. A study in which a number of similar people are randomly assigned to two (or more) groups to test a specific drug or intervention. One group (the experimental group) receives the intervention being tested, the other (the comparison or control group) receives an alternative intervention, a dummy intervention (placebo) or no intervention at all. The groups are followed up to see how effective the experimental intervention was. Outcomes are measured at specific times and any difference in response between the groups is assessed statistically. This method is also used to reduce bias.

CAMHS

child and adolescent mental health service

DCSF

Department for Children, Schools and Families

Decompensated liver disease

liver disease complicated by jaundice, ascites, variceal bleeding or hepatic encephalopathy

Diversion

when the drug is being taken by someone other than for whom it was prescribed

Extended brief intervention

This is motivationally-based and can take the form of motivational-enhancement therapy or motivational interviewing. The aim is to motivate people to change their behaviour by exploring with them why they behave the way they do and identifying positive reasons for making change.

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ES

Effect size. A measure that shows the magnitude of the outcome in one group compared with that in a control group.

For example, if the absolute risk reduction is shown to be 5% and it is the outcome of interest, the effect size is 5%.

The effect size is usually tested, using statistics, to find out how likely it is that the effect is a result of the treatment and has not just happened by chance (that is, to see if it is statistically significant).

Fixed-dose medication regimen

involves starting treatment with a standard dose, not defined by the level of alcohol withdrawal, and reducing the dose to zero over 7-10 days according to a standard protocol

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FRAMES

FRAMES is an acronym summarising the components of a brief intervention. Feedback (on the client's risk of having alcohol problems), responsibility (change is the client's responsibility), advice (provision of clear advice when requested), menu (what are the options for change?), empathy (an approach that is warm, reflective and understanding) and self-efficacy (optimism about the behaviour change).

GHB

gammahydroxybutyrate

i

NICE analysts have calculated this figure using data from the original study.

GGT

gamma glutamyl transferase

ICER

Incremental cost effectiveness ratio. A measure of the cost effectiveness of a treatment or health intervention. It estimates how much more the benefits of a certain treatment cost, compared with other treatments or health interventions.

GUM

genito-urinary medicine

NNT

Number needed to treat. The average number of people who need to receive an intervention to get a positive outcome. For example, if the NNT is four, then 4 people would have to receive the intervention to ensure one of them gets better. The closer the NNT is to one, the better the intervention. However, as with most data, caution is needed when considering whether results apply to populations beyond the sample described in the original study.

GMC's

General Medical Council's

LDQ

Leeds dependence questionnaire

Looked-after children

The term 'looked after' has a specific legal meaning. It refers to children and young people who are provided with accommodation on a voluntary basis for more than 24 hours. This compares with the term 'in care' which refers to those who are compulsorily removed from home and placed in care under a court order.

MMSE

mini-mental state examination

PCTs

primary care trusts

PAT

Paddington alcohol test

QALY

Quality-adjusted life year. A measure of the state of health of a person or group in which the benefits, in terms of length of life, are adjusted to reflect the quality of life. One QALY is equal to 1 year of life in perfect health.

QALYS are calculated by estimating the years of life remaining for a person following a particular treatment or intervention and weighting each year with a quality of life score (on a zero to one scale). It is often measured in terms of the person's ability to perform the activities of daily life, freedom from pain and mental disturbance.

Responsible authorities

Responsible authorities have to be notified of all licence variations and new applications and can make representations regarding them. The Licensing Act 2003 lists responsible authorities. They include the police, environmental health, child protection service, fire and rescue and trading standards.

SADQ

severity of alcohol dependence questionnaire

SD

Standard deviation. A measure used to summarise numerical data and describe how 'spread out' a set of measures (or 'values') are from the average. For example, the average height of a group of schoolchildren can be calculated using the total of all their heights added together and then divided by the number of schoolchildren in the group. Standard deviation measures the 'spread' of those heights. So, in the example it tells you whether all those in the group were about the same height or whether some were very tall and some were short.

Saturated

In relation to licensed premises, this describes a specific geographical area where there are already a lot of premises selling alcohol – and where the awarding of any new licences to sell alcohol may contribute to an increase in alcohol-related disorder.

Schools

For the purposes of this guidance, schools include: state-sector, special and independent primary and secondary schools; city technology colleges, academies and grammar schools; pupil referral units, secure training and local authority secure units; and further education colleges.

Screening

For the purposes of this guidance, screening involves identifying people who are not seeking treatment for alcohol problems but who may have an alcohol-use disorder. Practitioners may use any contact with clients to carry out this type of screening. The term is not used here to

refer to national screening programmes such as those recommended by the UK National Screening Committee.

SSRIs

selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors

SPC

summary of product characteristics

Structured brief advice

a brief intervention that takes only a few minutes to deliver

T-ASI

teen addiction severity index

Treatment

a programme designed to reduce alcohol consumption or any related problems. It could involve a combination of counselling and medicinal solutions

Unit

In the UK, alcoholic drinks are measured in units. Each unit corresponds to approximately 8 g or 10 ml of ethanol. The same volume of similar types of alcohol (for example, 2 pints of lager) can comprise a different number of units depending on the drink's strength (that is, its percentage concentration of alcohol).

Your responsibility

The guidance in this pathway represents the view of NICE, which was arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. Those working in the NHS, local authorities, the wider public, voluntary and community sectors and the private sector should take it into account when carrying out their professional, managerial or voluntary duties. Implementation of this guidance is the responsibility of local commissioners and/or providers. Commissioners and providers are reminded that it is their responsibility to implement the guidance, in their local context, in light of

their duties to avoid unlawful discrimination and to have regard to promoting equality of opportunity. Nothing in this guidance should be interpreted in a way which would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

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