

# APPENDIX - Screening Tool for Problem Drinking

## How Much is Too Much?

### SCREENING FOR ALCOHOL PROBLEMS IN THE ED

#### NIAAA QUANTITY AND FREQUENCY QUESTIONS

- On average, how many days per week do you drink alcohol?
- On a typical day when you drink, how many drinks do you have?
- What is the maximum number of drinks you had on any given occasion during the last month?

#### CAGE (IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS)

- Have you ever felt you should Cut down on your drinking?
- Have people Annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
- Have you ever felt bad or Guilty about your drinking?
- Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to “steady your nerves” or get rid of a hangover (Eye Opener)?

#### SCREEN IS POSITIVE IF:

- A positive response on 1 or more questions from CAGE and/or consumption:

Men	> 14 drinks/week or	> 4 drinks/occasion
Women	> 7 drinks/week or	> 3 drinks/occasion
Over 65 years old	> 7 drinks/week or	> 3 drinks/occasion

#### THEN ASSESS FOR:

- Medical problems: blackouts, depression, hypertension, injury abdominal pain, liver dysfunction, sleep disorders
- Laboratory: Liver function tests, macrocytic anemia
- Behavioral problems
- Alcohol dependence

#### INTERVENE:

##### If at-risk/harmful drinker:

- Advise patient of risk.
- Set drinking goals.
- Provide referral to primary care.

##### If alcohol dependent drinker:

- Assess acute risk of intoxication/withdrawal
- Negotiate referral (i.e. detoxification, AA and primary care).

Reference: The Physician's Guide to Helping Patients with Alcohol Problems. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. NIH Publication No. 95-3769 and the ASAM reference

- These same screening tools can also be used by families and friends to identify people who may have a problem with drinking .
- A confidential online screening tool is available at [www.alcoholscreening.org](http://www.alcoholscreening.org)
- For advice and resources on how to help friends with their drug and alcohol use see [http://www.theantidrug.com/pdfs/resources/teen/Step\\_Up\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.theantidrug.com/pdfs/resources/teen/Step_Up_Brochure.pdf)