

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 **C**ut down on your drinking?
- Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
- Have you ever felt bad or **G**uilty about your drinking?
- Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to “steady your nerves” or get rid of a hangover (**E**ye 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).