

The abbreviated versions of the AUDIT for screening heavy drinking among women

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Aims

- The aim of the study was to evaluate how the abbreviated versions of the AUDIT perform in comparison to the original AUDIT and what the optimal cut-offs are when screening for heavy drinking among women.

Subjects

- All the 40-year-old women in the city of Tampere, Finland are yearly invited for a health screening.
- From one year, data from 894 women (response rate 68.2%) invited for a health screening was utilized in the study.

Methods

- The questionnaires were evaluated against the Timeline Followback.
- Consumption of at least 140 g of absolute ethanol per week on average during the past month was considered as heavy drinking.

Questionnaires

- AUDIT = Original 10-item
- AUDIT-C = Questions 1, 2 and 3
- AUDIT-3 = 3
- AUDIT-PC = 1, 2, 4, 5 and 10
- AUDIT-QF = 1 and 2
- Five Shot = 1 and 2 + the last three questions from the CAGE

Areas under ROC curves

	Area under the curve	95% CI
AUDIT	0.94	0.91-0.96
AUDIT-C	0.94	0.91-0.96
AUDIT-3	0.87	0.82-0.92
AUDIT-PC	0.93	0.91-0.96
AUDIT-QF	0.94	0.91-0.97
Five Shot	0.92	0.89-0.94

Cut-off for the AUDIT

Cut-off	Sensitivity	Specificity
≥ 4	0.98	0.68
≥ 5	0.93	0.81
≥ 6	0.87	0.88
≥ 7	0.75	0.91
≥ 8	0.64	0.95
≥ 9	0.53	0.96

Best cut-offs for the questionnaires

	Cut-off	Sensitivity	Specificity
AUDIT	≥ 6	0.87	0.88
AUDIT-C	≥ 5	0.84	0.88
AUDIT-3	≥ 2	0.64	0.92
AUDIT-PC	≥ 4	0.93	0.87
AUDIT-QF	≥ 4	0.87	0.90
Five Shot	≥ 2.0	0.93	0.83

Conclusions (1)

- The 10-item AUDIT, AUDIT-C, Five-Shot, AUDIT-PC and AUDIT-QF are equally effective tools in screening for heavy drinking among middle-aged women.
- Their applicability is achieved only if the cut-offs are tailored according to gender.

Conclusions (2)

- The shortest and easiest to score could be used to screen for heavy drinking with no loss of effectiveness.
- There are, however, other issues to consider when choosing an instrument, including the need for further assessment of patients who screen positive.

Aalto M, Tuunanen M, Sillanaukee P, Seppä K. Effectiveness of structured questionnaires for screening heavy drinking in middle-aged women. Alcohol Clin Exp Res, in press.