

CAGE and CAGE-AID Introduction and Scoring

The CAGE questionnaire is used to test for alcohol abuse and dependence in adults. The CAGE-AID version of the tool has been adapted to include drug use. These tools are not used to diagnose diseases, but only to indicate whether a problem might exist. The questions are most effective when used as part of a general health history and should NOT be preceded by questions about how much or how frequently the patient drinks or uses drugs. The reason for this is that denial is very common among persons abusing alcohol or other drugs; and therefore, the CAGE/CAGE-AID questions focus the discussion toward the behavioral effects of the drinking or drug use rather than toward the number of drinks or drugs used per day.

Item responses on the CAGE and CAGE-AID are scored 0 or 1, with a higher score indicating alcohol or drug use problems. A total score of 2 or greater is considered clinically significant, which then should lead the physician to ask more specific questions about frequency and quantity.

The downside of the CAGE/CAGE-AID approach is that questions do not discriminate well between active and inactive drinkers or drug users, so following positive scores on the CAGE with questions regarding usual consumption patterns (e.g., frequency/quantity/heaviest consumption) will help make this distinction.

Screening Tools

CAGE

1. Have you ever felt you should **cut down** on your drinking?
2. Have people **annoyed** you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt bad or **guilty** about your drinking?
4. **Eye Opener:** Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

Scoring: Item responses on the CAGE are scored 0 for "no" and 1 for "yes" answers. A higher score is an indication of alcohol problems. A total score of 2 or greater is considered clinically significant.

CAGE-AID (CAGE Questions Adapted to Include Drugs)

1. Have you ever felt you ought to cut down on your drinking or drug use?
2. Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking or drug use?
3. Have you felt bad or guilty about your drinking or drug use?
4. Have you ever had a drink or used drugs first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

Scoring: Item responses on the CAGE-AID are scored 0 for "no" and 1 for "yes" answers. A higher score is an indication of alcohol problems. A total score of 2 or greater is considered clinically significant.