

The Clinical Assessment of Substance Abuse Disorders



NIDA
Centers of Excellence
for
Physician Information



Developers: Drexel University College of Medicine and University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine

Curriculum resource type: Didactic

Method used: Web-based videos and instructional text

Intended audience: Medical students (years 1-4), residents in primary care specialties, and practicing physicians in primary care specialties

Implementation time: 1.5-2 hours

Additional components: References; NIDA treatment guidelines

Educational objectives:

- Learn the interviewing skills needed to effectively screen for substance use and abuse in patients.
- Recognize the high rate of psychiatric and medical comorbidity and how to screen patients for both.
- Evaluate a patient's stage of addiction and demonstrate how to supportively recommend substance abuse treatment.
- Describe the skills required for addiction prevention counseling and for setting limits on requests for prescription medications.

Evaluation tools: Behavior skills checklist and learner assessment questions

Curriculum resource description: Substance abuse and substance dependence are commonly seen in patients in medical practices and are frequently comorbid with other medical and psychiatric disorders. Considerable societal stigma exists toward patients with addictive disorders; healthcare providers frequently have negative attitudes toward these patients as well. The identification, assessment, and referral for treatment of patients are strongly influenced by physician attitudes and life experiences with personal, family, or prior patients' substance use. Effective tools and strategies help clinicians recognize the physiologic and behavioral red flags of addiction and elicit a substance use history in a nonjudgmental manner, so you can make the appropriate diagnosis and develop a patient-specific plan for treatment and referral.

This educational module on the clinical assessment of substance abuse disorders presents written text and instructional videos that provide the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed in the screening, evaluation, and referral of patients with substance abuse disorders.

Key words: Drug abuse; drug addiction; substance abuse; patient interviews; stage of addiction

