

Identification and risk for alcohol related harms in gender diverse youth and adults

Category: Oral Presentation

Abstract Body

Background: Transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) adults have been underserved in addiction treatment and research. It is important to establish if widely-used tools adequately detect alcohol harms in these groups. Our group recently published a review (Dermody et al., 2023) highlighting that some of our commonly-used measures of alcohol harms are not gender-inclusive. The goal of this project was to examine the psychometric properties of some of these measures, including a proposed adapted gender-inclusive version of the Short Michigan Alcohol Screening Test (SMAST-GI), in TGD adults. **Methods:** In 2022, an ecological momentary assessment (EMA) study with baseline interviews was completed with TGD adults who drink heavily and reside in Canada was completed (N = 24; mean age: 31.54 (SD = 9.64); 4 transgender women, 7 transgender men, 13 non-binary). Participants completed the CAGE Alcohol Questionnaire, Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT), and SMAST-GI, and were interviewed with the Diagnostic Alcohol Research Tool (DART) Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) Module. Analyses using R examined reliability (Cronbach's alpha), convergent validity (intercorrelations of measure scores), and sensitivity and specificity of common cut-off points relative to DART AUD diagnosis. **Results:** The mean (SD) scores for the tools were: AUDIT 10.38 (6.83), SMAST-GI 2.08 (2.15), and CAGE 1.79 (SD = 1.18). Ten (42%) individuals met AUD criteria. Reliability was acceptable for the AUDIT ($\alpha = .85$), but unacceptable for the SMAST-GI ($\alpha = .62$) and CAGE ($\alpha = .58$). Further, some SMAST-GI items were problematic (e.g., were not endorsed or negatively/weakly correlated with total score). Correlations were moderate to high amongst scores ($r = .76$ for AUDIT/SMAST, $.70$ for AUDIT/CAGE; $.69$ for CAGE/SMAST). Sensitivity and specificity, respectively, for commonly used cut-off scores were: AUDIT (cut-point of ≥ 8 : $.70$, $.64$), SMAST (cut-point ≥ 4 : $.50$, $.93$), and CAGE (cut-point ≥ 2 : $.70$, $.57$). **Discussion:** The AUDIT with the widely-used cut-off ≥ 8 appears adequate for use with TGD adults. The CAGE and SMAST-GI should be used with caution given their lower reliability. Future research is needed with larger samples to explore various cut-off options. Further, qualitative interviews and focus groups would be beneficial to ensure the tools are gender-inclusive and adequately encompass alcohol harms experienced by TGD individuals.

Key Words

- Alcohol
- Assessment/screening

- LGBTQ

Learning Objective # 1

To understand best practices in conducting gender-inclusive assessments of alcohol harms in gender-diverse populations, such as transgender, non-binary, agender, gender queer, and additional groups whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth.

Learning Objective # 2

Appreciate the importance of future psychometric and community-based research to further improve our ability to identify alcohol harms in gender-diverse groups.

Reference # 1

Dermody, S. S., Uhrig, A., Moore, A., Raessi, T., & Abramovich, A. (2023). A narrative systematic review of the gender inclusivity of measures of harmful drinking and their psychometric properties among transgender adults. *Addiction*. DOI: 10.1111/add.16212. PMID: 37070479.

Reference # 2

Dermody, S. (2021, September 15). PACT Pilot Study. Retrieved from osf.io/szm4w

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