NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

NICE indicator guidance

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# Indicator NM177

The percentage of patients with a new diagnosis of depression or anxiety in the preceding 12 months who have been screened for hazardous drinking using the FAST or AUDIT-C tool in the 3 months before or after their diagnosis being recorded.

# Indicator type

General practice indicator suitable for use in the QOF.

# Introduction

Alcohol is a cause of significant public health burden but use is widespread amongst most groups of society. Alcohol is the leading cause of ill-health, early mortality and disability in those aged 15-49 years of age ([NHS Digital 2017](https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/statistics-on-alcohol/statistics-on-alcohol-england-2017)). Harmful drinking is associated with multiple physical and mental health problems.

Alcohol misuse contributes to 200 health conditions including depression. It is sometimes used to manage symptoms of anxiety and depression but is likely to make those symptoms worse. In 2017/18 there were 37,285 admission episodes for mental and behavioural disorders due to the use of alcohol ([Public Health England, 2019](https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/local-alcohol-profiles)).

# Rationale

Managing alcohol intake can help to manage symptoms in those with anxiety and depression. This indicator aims to identify people with depression or anxiety who are at risk of hazardous alcohol consumption. Tools such as AUDIT‑C and FAST can help to identify people that may not be alcohol dependent but would benefit from an reducing their alcohol consumption.

# Source guidance

[Alcohol-use disorders: prevention](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph24) (2010) NICE guideline PH24, recommendation 9

[Common mental health problems: identification and pathways to care](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg123) (2011) NICE guideline CG123, recommendation 1.4.1.6

# Specification

Numerator: The number of patients in the denominator who have been screened for hazardous drinking using the FAST or AUDIT-C tool in the 3 months before or after their diagnosis being recorded.

Denominator: The number of patients with a new diagnosis of depression or anxiety in the preceding 12 months.

Calculation: (Numerator/denominator) \* 100.

Exclusions:

* People with an existing diagnosis of an alcohol related disease or disorder.
* Children under 10 years.

Minimum population: The indicator would be appropriate to assess performance at individual general practice level.

# Further information

This is NICE indicator guidance, which is part of the [NICE menu of indicators](https://www.nice.org.uk/Standards-and-Indicators/index). This document does not represent formal NICE guidance.