NICE National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

NICE

Alcohol use: brief intervention for people with depression or anxiety

NICE indicator
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Indicator

The percentage of patients with a new diagnosis of depression or anxiety and a FAST score of 3 or more or AUDIT-C score of 5 or more in the preceding 12 months, who have received brief intervention to help them reduce their alcohol related risk within 3 months of the score being recorded.

Indicator type

General practice indicator suitable for use in the Quality and Outcomes Framework.

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To find out how to use indicators and how we develop them, see our NICE indicator process guide.

Rationale

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 to 49 years of age (see the NHS Digital's statistics on alcohol 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 (see Public Health England's alcohol profile 2019).

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. Managing alcohol intake can help to manage symptoms in those with anxiety and depression. Brief intervention can either comprise of a short session of structured brief advice or an extended brief intervention using motivation techniques. Reviews have shown that interventions in primary care are effective in reducing alcohol consumption (Kaner et al. 2018).

Source guidance

- Alcohol-use disorders: prevention. NICE guideline PH24 (2010), recommendation 9
- Alcohol-use disorders: diagnosis, assessment and management of harmful drinking (high-risk drinking) and alcohol dependence. NICE guideline CG115 (2011, updated 2014), recommendation 1.3.8.1

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Specification

Numerator: The number of patients in the denominator who have received brief intervention to help them reduce their alcohol related risk within 3 months of the score being recorded.

Denominator: The number of patients with a new diagnosis of depression or anxiety with a FAST score of 3 or more, or AUDIT-C score of 5 or more in the preceding 12 months.

Calculation: Numerator divided by the denominator, multiplied by 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.

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