

CAGE

Cage is an acronym for cut down, annoy, guilty and 'eye opener'. It is a 4-item self-report screening test designed to identify dependent drinkers and focuses on lifetime rather than current drinking. It was validated in 1974 and is the most widely used test in clinical practice (Smart et al, 1991). It takes one minute to complete and is easy to administer. Sensitivity ranges from 60-90% and specificity from 40-95%. The problem with using CAGE in health care settings is that it does not ask about the frequency of alcohol use, levels of consumption or episodes of heavy drinking, all factors that can identify patients in the earlier stages of problem drinking (Nilssen & Cone, 1994).

CAGE

C Have you ever felt you should **Cut down** on your drinking?

A Have people **Annoyed** you by criticising your drinking?

G Have you ever felt bad or **Guilty** about your drinking?

E Eye opener: Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

Two positive responses are considered a positive result and indicate that further assessment is warranted. (Nilssen & Cone, 1994 – taken from Mayfield et al 1974)