

CAGE Questionnaire

Consisting of four (4) clinical interview questions, the CAGE assessment tool assists providers with identifying patients who may have problems with or abuse alcohol. The acronym “CAGE” relates to the patient’s feelings about her/his alcohol consumption.

Often used by primary care providers, the CAGE assessment tool should be administered with informal phrasing as a part of a general health history. It should not be preceded by questions about how much or how frequently the patient drinks.

- Have you ever felt you should **C**ut down on your drinking?
- Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
- Have you ever felt bad or **G**uilty about your drinking?
- Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover (**E**ye opener)?

Scoring:

Item responses on the CAGE are scored 0 or 1, with a higher score an indication of alcohol problems. A total score of 2 or greater is considered clinically significant.

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Developed by Dr. John Ewing, founding Director of the Bowles Center for Alcohol Studies, University of North Carolina at Cahpel Hill, CAGE is an internationally used assessment instrument for identifying alcoholics. It is particularly popular with primary care givers. CAGE has been translated into several languages.

The CAGE questions can be used in the clinical setting using informal phrasing. It has been demonstrated that they are most effective when used as part of a general health history and should NOT be preceded by questions about how much or how frequently the patient drinks (see “Alcoholism: The Keys to the CAGE” by DL Steinweg and H Worth; American Journal of Medicine 94: 520-523, May 1993.

The exact wording that can be used in research studies can be found in: JA Ewing “Detecting Alcoholism: The CAGE Questionnaire” JAMA 252: 1905-1907, 1984. Researchers and clinicians who are publishing studies using the CAGE Questionnaire should cite the above reference. No other permission is necessary unless it is used in any profit-making endeavor in which case this Center would require to negotiate a payment.

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Source: Dr. John Ewing, founding Director of the Bowles Center for Alcohol Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill