



Management of substance abuse

The ASSIST project - Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test

There is substantial evidence for the benefits of screening and brief intervention in primary health care for alcohol problems. However, there is a need for screening and brief interventions with cross-cultural relevance for substances other than alcohol or tobacco, such as cannabis, amphetamines, cocaine and opiates.

The Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST) was developed for the World Health Organization (WHO) by an international group of substance abuse researchers to detect and manage substance use and related problems in primary and general medical care settings. Primary health care professionals are well-positioned to provide interventions targeted to all substances irrespective of their legal status



Project phases

The ASSIST has undergone significant testing in three sequential phases (I, II and III) to ensure that it is feasible, reliable, valid, flexible, comprehensive and cross-culturally relevant, and able to be linked to brief interventions. ASSIST is currently in its fourth Phase aimed at world wide dissemination. See more information about the four phases in the right column.

The ASSIST screening test

[Download the ASSIST screening test version 3.0 and feedback card](#)

The ASSIST screening test version 3.0 is available in English and in 10 other languages (Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, French, German, Hindi, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian).

[Download the ASSIST screening test version 3.1 in different languages](#)

ASSIST package

The ASSIST package is developed to help the primary health

professionals to detect and manage substance use and related problems in primary and general medical care settings.

The package includes three different manuals:

[The Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test \(ASSIST\): manual for use in primary care](#)

This manual introduces the ASSIST and describes how to use it in health care settings - particularly community based primary health care settings – to identify people who are using substances, so that a brief intervention (or referral) can be provided, as appropriate.

[The ASSIST-linked brief intervention for hazardous and harmful substance use: a manual for use in primary care](#)

This manual explains the theoretical basis and evidence for the effectiveness of brief interventions and assists primary health care workers in conducting a simple brief intervention for clients whose substance use is putting them at risk.

[Self-help strategies for cutting down or stopping substance use: a guide](#)

This guide helps patients that think that their substance use is putting them at risk of experiencing problems, to weigh up their substance use behavior and give them some ideas about how to change it.

The three different manuals in Spanish:

[La prueba de detección de consumo de alcohol, tabaco y sustancias \(ASSIST\): Manual para uso en la atención primaria pdf, 569kb](#)

[Intervención breve vinculada a ASSIST para el consumo riesgoso y nocivo de sustancias: Manual para uso en la atención primaria pdf, 465kb](#)

[Estrategias de Autoayuda para reducir o eliminar el consumo de sustancias: Una guía pdf, 1.22Mb](#)

The three different manuals in Georgian:

[The Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test \(ASSIST\): manual for use in primary care \[828kb\]](#)

[The ASSIST-linked brief intervention for hazardous and harmful substance use: manual for use in primary care \[820kb\]](#)

[Self-help strategies for cutting down or stopping substance use: a guide \[1.5MB\]](#)

ASSIST training resources

[DVD and manual targeted at nurses to provide a step-by-step approach on how to administer the ASSIST and provide an effective brief intervention in a primary health care setting](#)

Published readings

WHO ASSIST Working Group (2002). The Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST): development, reliability and feasibility. *Addiction*, 97 (9): 1183-1194.

Humeniuk RE, Ali RA, Babor TF, Farrell M, Formigoni ML, Jittiwutikarn J, Boerngen de Larcera R, Ling W, Marsden J, Monteiro M, Nhiwhatiwa S, Pal H, Poznyak V & Simon S (2008). Validation of the Alcohol Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST). *Addiction* 103(6): 1039-1047

Project reports

[Validation of the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test \(ASSIST\) and Pilot Brief Intervention: A Technical Report of Phase II Findings of the WHO ASSIST Project](#)
pdf, 1.34Mb

[The Effectiveness of a Brief Intervention for Illicit Drugs Linked to the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test \(ASSIST\) in Primary Health Care Settings: A Technical Report of Phase III Findings of the WHO ASSIST Randomized Controlled Trial](#)
pdf, 1.04Mb

Other WHO related activities

[Involvement of nurses and midwives in screening and brief interventions for hazardous and harmful use of alcohol and other psychoactive substances, 2010](#)

This report provides details of a review of the literature on the involvement of nurses and midwives in screening and brief interventions for hazardous and harmful use of alcohol and other psychoactive substances.

Related links

[Read about the launch of the ASSIST package.](#)

[Download project fact sheet](#)
pdf, 151kb

ASSIST project phases:

Phase I (1997-1999)

Planning and ASSIST development. International feasibility and reliability study of the ASSIST.

Phase II (2000-2002)

International validity study of the ASSIST.
Feasibility study of brief interventions linked to the ASSIST.

Phase III (2002-2007)

International study of effectiveness of a brief intervention linked to the ASSIST (randomized controlled trial).

[Read more about Phase III](#)

Phase IV (2008-2011)

Development of effective and sustainable models of ASSIST-based interventions. Dissemination,

implementation and evaluation of ASSIST-based interventions in different settings and contexts.

[Read more about Phase IV](#)

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