

Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test – Lite (ASSIST-Lite): description, strengths and knowledge gaps^[1]

Purpose

The ASSSIT-Lite is a short-form version of the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test – Lite (ASSIST), that can be used to screen for a range of drugs of concern.^[2]

Drug(s) of Concern

- Alcohol
- Cannabis
- Tobacco/nicotine
- Methamphetamine
- Opioids/heroin
- Benzodiazepines
- Hallucinogens
- Sedatives
- Inhalants
- Cocaine

Time-frame(s) of Interest

- Recent (last 3 months)

Populations Tested

- Adults^[2]
- Young people^[3]

Settings Tested

- AOD specialist services^[2]
- Primary care^[2,3]

Diagnostics

Utility:

- ✓ Validated with an Australian population^[2]
- ✓ Easy to administer
- ✓ Quick to complete
- ✓ Detects substance use related problems^[2]

Psychometric properties:

- A study on adults found high sensitivity (88%-100%) and good specificity (61%-76%) across different drugs. AUC ranged from 0.81-0.97 indicating good diagnostic accuracy.^[1]
- In a study on adolescents, high sensitivity and specificity was reported for cannabis use disorders (sensitivity = 96%; specificity = 88%; AUC = 0.92), also at a minimally low cut-point^[3]

ASSIST-Lite

These questions ask about psychoactive substances in the **past 3 months only**

Tobacco	1. Did you smoke a cigarette containing tobacco?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	1a. Did you usually smoke more than 10 cigarettes each day?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	1b. Did you usually smoke within 30 minutes after waking?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
		Subtotal: <input type="text"/>	
Alcohol	2. Did you have a drink containing alcohol?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	2a. On any occasion, did you drink more than 4 standard drinks of alcohol?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	2b. Have you tried and failed to control, cut down or stop drinking?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	2c. Has anyone expressed concern about your drinking?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
		Subtotal: <input type="text"/>	
Cannabis	3. Did you use cannabis?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	3a. Have you had a strong desire or urge to use cannabis at least once a week or more often?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	3b. Has anyone expressed concern about your use of cannabis?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
		Subtotal: <input type="text"/>	
Amphetamine-type stimulants	4. Did you use an amphetamine-type stimulant, or cocaine, or a stimulant medication not as prescribed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	4a. Did you use a stimulant at least once each week or more often?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	4b. Has anyone expressed concern about your use of a stimulant?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
		Subtotal: <input type="text"/>	
Sedatives	5. Did you use a sedative or sleeping medication not as prescribed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	5a. Have you had a strong desire or urge to use a sedative or sleeping medication at least once a week or more often?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	5b. Has anyone expressed concern about your use of a sedative or sleeping medication?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
		Subtotal: <input type="text"/>	
Opioids	6. Did you use a street opioid (e.g. heroin), or an opioid-containing medication not as prescribed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	6a. Have you tried and failed to control, cut down or stop using an opioid?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	6b. Has anyone expressed concern about your use of an opioid?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
		Subtotal: <input type="text"/>	
Other Substances	7. Did you use any other psychoactive altering substance?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	What did you take?		
	7a. Have you had a strong desire or urge to use the prescribed drug at least once a week or more often?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	7b. Has anyone expressed concern about your use of the prescribed drug?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1	No <input type="checkbox"/> 0
		Subtotal: <input type="text"/>	
		Total: <input type="text"/>	

Administrator, Rater, Scoring and Interpretation

Administrator: Clinician/Worker
Self-complete
Online

Rater: Client

Scoring & interpretation: For questions 1-7, score 1 point for each question answered "yes".

A substance score is calculated by summing the points obtained for that substance. For each substance the minimum total score possible is 0, and the maximum total score possible is 3 (i.e. total score range for each substance is 0-3).

Question 7 is not scored, but may prompt further assessment.

ASSIST-Lite Risk Scores

Drug of concern	Risk		
	Low	Moderate	High
Alcohol	0-1	2	3-4
Tobacco, Cannabis, Stimulants, Sedatives & Opioids	0	1-2	3

Resources

Tool citation:	Ali, R., Meena, S., Eastwood, B., Richards, I., and Marsden, J. <i>Ultra-rapid screening for substance-use disorders: the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST-Lite)</i> . <i>Journal of Drug and Alcohol Dependence</i> , 2013. 132(1-2): 352-361.
Copyright:	May be downloaded and used without restriction.
Training/manual:	Training is recommended (ASSIST portal: https://assistportal.com.au/download/assist-lite-approved/?wpdmdl=1256).
Brief intervention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General population: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.who.int/substance_abuse/activities/assist_test/en/ • https://assistportal.com.au/resources-2/. • Young people - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DASSA. ASSIST-Y. <i>Instructions for clinicians: how to administer the ASSIST-Y and linked intervention to young people aged 15-17 years</i>. 2011. DASSA, Adelaide. https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/ea47f7004011ecb88359bb4826472d56/ASSIST-Y+15-17yo+instructions+for+clinicians+Dec+2011+revised+March+2017.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-ea47f7004011ecb88359bb4826472d56-m8FSGgb. • Methamphetamine - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harland, J. and R. Ali, <i>ASSIST on ice: The Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test and brief intervention for methamphetamine use</i>. 2017, DASSA-WHO Collaborating Centre, University of Adelaide, Australia: Adelaide: https://cracksintheice.org.au/pdf/ASSIST-on-ICE-eManual.pdf.
Other:	ASSIST Portal: https://assistportal.com.au/download/assist-lite-approved/?wpdmdl=1256 .

Knowledge Gaps

The ASSIST-Lite is a relatively new innovation in the suite of ASSIST resources, and it is increasingly administered in a broad range of settings.

ASSIST-Lite developers noted in the original study that further research was required to address validation limitations.^[2] Specifically a need for further validation with:

- Samples with a high prevalence of various substances
- New samples, as the ASSIST-Lite was derived from the original ASSIST sample.

References

1. Fischer, J.A., Roche, A.M., and Duraisingam, V. *Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST-Lite) tool: description, strengths and knowledge gaps*. AOD Screening and Withdrawal Tools Collection. 2021, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA), Flinders University: Adelaide, South Australia. (overview citation)
2. Ali, R., Meena, S., Eastwood, B., Richards, I., and Marsden, J. *Ultra-rapid screening for substance-use disorders: the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST-Lite)*. *Journal of Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 2013. 132(1-2): 352-361.
3. Gryczynski, J., Kelly, S.M., Mitchell, S.G., et al. *Validation and performance of the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST) among adolescent primary care patients*. *Addiction*, 2015. 110(2): 240-247.