

Indigenous Risk Impact Screen (IRIS): description, strengths and knowledge gaps^[1]

Purpose

The 13 item Indigenous Risk Impact Screen (IRIS) assesses for alcohol and other drugs (AOD), and mental health and emotional wellbeing risks amongst adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.^[2,3]

Drug(s) of Concern

- Not specified

Time-frame(s) of Interest

- Recent (last 6 months)

Populations Tested

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people^[3]
- Males & females^[2]
- Adults^[2,3]
- Incarcerated populations^[2]

Settings Tested

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

Diagnostics

Utility:

- ✓ Validated with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified prison populations
- ✓ Can be used to screen for both AOD, and mental health & emotional wellbeing^[2,3]

Psychometric properties:

- Considered to have good domain coefficients, with both domains having good convergent validity with other well-established instruments
- Both domains have shown high internal consistency and good four-week stability^[2,3]

Indigenous Risk Impact Screen (IRIS)

Please tick (✓) one box for each question

Alcohol and Other Drug Risk

Q1 In the last 6 months have you needed to drink or use drugs more to get the effects you want?

No 1
Yes, a bit more 2
Yes, a lot more 3

Q2 When you have cut down or stopped drinking or using drugs in the past, have you experienced any symptoms, such as sweating, shaking, feeling sick in the tummy/vomiting, diarrhoea, feeling really down or worried, problems sleeping, aches and pains?

Never 1
Sometimes when I stop 2
Yes, every time 3

Q3 How often do you feel that you end up drinking or using drugs much more than you expected?

Never/Hardly ever 1
Once a month 2
Once a fortnight 3
Once a week 4
More than once a week 5
Most days/Every day 6

Q4 Do you ever feel out of control with your drinking or drug use?

Never/Hardly ever 1
Sometimes 2
Often 3
Most days/Every day 4

Q5 How difficult would it be to stop or cut down on your drinking or drug use?

Not difficult at all 1
Fairly easy 2
Difficult 3
I couldn't stop or cut down 4

Q6 What time of the day do you usually start drinking or using drugs?

At night 1
In the afternoon 2
Sometimes in the morning 3
As soon as I wake up 4

Q7 How often do you find that your whole day has involved drinking or using drugs?

Never/Hardly ever 1
Sometimes 2
Often 3
Most days/Every day 4

Alcohol and Other Drug Risk Score (Q1-Q7):

Indigenous Risk Impact Screen (IRIS)

Please tick (✓) one box for each question

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Risk

Q8 How often do you feel down in the dumps, sad or slack?

Never/Hardly ever 1
 Sometimes 2
 Most days/Every day 3

Q9 How often have you felt that life is hopeless?

Never/Hardly ever 1
 Sometimes 2
 Most days/Every day 3

Q10 How often do you feel nervous or scared?

Never/Hardly ever 1
 Sometimes 2
 Most days/Every day 3

Q11 Do you worry much?

Never/Hardly ever 1
 Sometimes 2
 Most days/Every day 3

Q12 How often do you feel restless and that you can't sit still?

Never/Hardly ever 1
 Sometimes 2
 Most days/Every day 3

Q13 Do past events in your family still affect your well-being today (such as being taken away from family)?

Never/Hardly ever 1
 Sometimes 2
 Most days/Every day 3

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Score (Q8-Q13):

Administrator, Rater, Scoring and Interpretation

Administrator: Clinician/Worker
Self-complete

Rater: Client

Scoring & interpretation: Two risk scores are obtained with the IRIS: AOD risk, and mental health and emotional wellbeing risk.

AOD risk score:

- Comprises seven questions (questions 1–7)
- Calculated by summing responses to questions 1 to 7. The minimum total score possible is 7, and the maximum total score possible is 28 (i.e. total score range: 7–28)
- A score of 10 or more is likely to indicate risky AOD drug use.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing risk score:

- Comprises six questions (questions 8–13)
- Calculated by summing responses to questions 8–13. The minimum total score possible is 6, and the maximum total score possible is 18 (i.e. total score range: 6–18)
- A score of 11 or more is likely to indicate high risk for mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Resources

Tool citation: Schlesinger, C., Ober, C., McCarthy, M., et al. *The development and validation of the Indigenous Risk Impact Screen (IRIS): a 13-item screening instrument for alcohol and drug and mental health risk*. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 2007. 26(2): 109–117.^[3]

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Training/manual: Training recommended: Insight: <https://insight.qld.edu.au/shop/iris-screening-instrument-and-risk-card>

Brief intervention: Yes. It was designed to comprise both a screening instrument and brief intervention. <https://insight.qld.edu.au/toolkits/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander/detail>.

Other: InSight, *First Nations Toolkit: Alcohol and other drug training and workforce development*. 2018. Retrieved from <https://insight.qld.edu.au/toolkits/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander/detail>.

Knowledge Gaps

The IRIS has been widely recommended in a broad range of Australian guidelines and policy documents. It is one of very few tools designed, developed and validated at the outset from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective. The IRIS has also been embedded in Australia-wide training and education programs (e.g., Lovett et al, 2014^[4]).

Validation of the IRIS has been limited to two Queensland-based studies. In these two studies, participant language groups/country representations and gender were not reported.^[5]

Reviews are recommended to:

- Map how the IRIS has been taken up and implemented across Australia
- Synthesise and examine what research that has been conducted using the IRIS
- Better understand the service provider context of how, why and for whom the IRIS works, and in what circumstances.

References

1. Fischer, J.A., Roche, A.M., and Duraisingam, V. *An overview of the Indigenous Risk Impact Screen (IRIS): description, strengths and knowledge gaps*. 2021, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA), Flinders University: Adelaide, South Australia. (overview citation)
2. Ober, C., Dingle, K., Clavarino, A., Najman, J.M., et al. *Validating a screening tool for mental health and substance use risk in an Indigenous prison population*. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 2013. 32(6): 611-617.
3. Schlesinger, C., Ober, C., McCarthy, M., et al. *The development and validation of the Indigenous Risk Impact Screen (IRIS): a 13-item screening instrument for alcohol and drug and mental health risk*. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 2007. 26(2): 109-117.
4. Lovett, R., Dance, P., Guthrie, J., Brown, R., and Tongs, J. *Wallan Girri: developing a culturally mediated case management model for problematic alcohol use among urban Indigenous people*. *Australian Health Review*, 2014. 38: 440-446.
5. Newton, D., Day, A., Gillies, C., and Fernandez, E. *A review of evidence-based evaluation of measures for assessing social and emotional well-being in Indigenous Australians*. *Australian Psychologist*, 2015. 50(1): 40-50.