

Which AUDIT-C cut-off? preliminary results from a systematic review of AUDIT-C thresholds for males and females

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Introduction and Aims: The AUDIT-C is a commonly administered screening tool for heavy drinking. Recommended cut-offs for males and females are 4 and 3 respectively (Bradley et al. 2007). However a broad range of sex and population cut-off points have been reported in the research and practice literature. Our aim was to synthesise these results to inform measurement decisions in both clinical and research settings.

Design and methods: A systematic review of validation studies published in English recommending optimal AUDIT-C cut-off points for males and females, with associated sensitivity and specificity was undertaken.

Key Findings: Eighteen studies were identified, reporting cut-off scores in nine different populations. For males, cut-off scores ranged from 4-8 (eight studies) and for females 2-7 (eight studies). Sex differences were not reported in nine studies (range: 3-10). In studies where sex was not differentiated, cut-off scores ranged from 3 (e.g. university students) to 10 (AOD treatment). Data on sensitivity and specificity will be presented.

Discussion and Conclusions: Sex and specific sample characteristics are important considerations in determining risky drinking cut-off points in both clinical and research settings and setting of AUDIT-C administration are important considerations in selecting an appropriate cut-off.

Implications for Translational Research: Clinicians and researchers will have a resource providing optimal AUDIT-C cut-off thresholds for males and females in different settings.

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