

Smoking, Alcohol and Substance Misuse Summary

The role of the GP in smoking, alcohol and substance misuse

All GPs have a responsibility to provide both holistic general medical care and specific treatment for people who smoke or have alcohol or substance misuse problems.

As a GP, your role is to:

- Recognise that smoking, alcohol and substance misuse are common problems in the community and understand their relationship to disease and premature death
- Understand that harmful use of alcohol and other substances is often unrecognised and can take a range of forms (including excessive use, binges, and dependency)
- Identify and offer interventions, including effective advice and treatment, to people who smoke or misuse alcohol or substances
- Refer to and develop partnerships with wider local services
- Recognise and manage medical consequences of smoking, alcohol and substance misuse
- Be aware of wider social issues, including the need to protect children and family members from the potential impact of smoking, alcohol or substance misuse, and respond to any safeguarding concerns
- Appreciate that helping people to stop smoking or overcome alcohol and substance misuse, whilst challenging at times, can be very rewarding for the doctor and life changing for the patient. Smokers and people with alcohol and substance misuse problems can often be stigmatised by society and health professionals and need to be treated with non-judgemental compassion.

Key Areas for Exam Preparation

Common and important conditions

Dependent and non-dependent misuse of alcohol and substances, and the effects and risks of misuse

(short term and long term, medical and non-medical) including:

- Common effects of the main problem drugs including anabolic steroids, antidepressants, benzodiazepines, cannabis, cocaine, gabapentinoids, new psychoactive substances (NPS), opiates, solvents, stimulants and Z-drugs
- Complications of alcohol and substance misuse in pregnancy including foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, growth retardation, neonatal withdrawal and pre-term delivery. Antenatal care for women misusing substances and alcohol including involvement of social services and safeguarding of unborn children
- Crises occurring in relation to substance and alcohol misuse including intoxication, mental health emergencies, overdose, safeguarding emergencies, trauma, Wernicke's encephalopathy and withdrawal
- Medical complications of substance misuse including:
 - Infections
 - local infection in injecting drug misuse: cellulitis and abscess
 - systemic infection directly related to injecting drug misuse, including blood borne viruses (BBV) (hepatitis B and C, and HIV), endocarditis
 - opportunistic infection including tuberculosis;
- malnutrition;
- nasal and respiratory symptoms secondary to nasal substance (e.g. cocaine) use;
- non-infective cardiac complications e.g. acute coronary syndrome, arrhythmia, Ischaemic heart disease; and venous thromboembolic disease
- Medical complications of long-term alcohol misuse, including:
 - alcoholic liver and abdominal disease including ascites, cirrhosis, pancreatitis, portal hypertension and varices;
 - common health conditions where alcohol use may be a contributing factor, including cancer and hypertension;
- neurological complications including encephalopathy, peripheral neuropathy and Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome; and vitamin deficiencies
- Misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medications
- Polyabuse of drugs and combined misuse of drugs and alcohol
- Mental health problems in the context of alcohol and substance misuse, including dual diagnosis, and 'self-medication' of mental health problems with drugs or alcohol
- Tolerance, dependence and withdrawal

Suggested Resources

General information

- <https://elearning.rcgp.org.uk>
- <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>
- <http://www.bandolier.org.uk>
- <https://drinkanddrugsnews.com>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/assessing-fitness-to-drive-a-guide-for-medical-professionals>
- <https://www.think.gov.uk>
- <https://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/harmful-drinking>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/alcohol-and-drug-misuse-prevention-and-treatment-guidance>
- <https://smartrecovery.org.uk>
- <https://www.talktofrank.com>

Common effects of the main problem drugs

- <https://bnf.nice.org.uk>
- <https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/new-psychoactive-substances>
- <https://www.drugwise.org.uk/new-psychoactive-substances/>
- <https://adf.org.au/drug-facts/new-psychoactive-substances/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-psychoactive-substances-nps-resource-pack>
- https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&sxsrf=ACYBGNSrPoJOvqPARnkT4j7NbdIQKeAdhw:1576665195668&q=new+psychoactive+substances+2019&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi4uqPH_77mAhUIQEEAHeq1DrEQ1QIoAHoECA8QAQ&biw=1199&bih=765
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=portal%20hypertension&sp=onMental health>

Complications of alcohol and substance misuse in pregnancy

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=alcohol%20and%20pregnancy>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=drugs%20and%20pregnancy>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=foetal%20alcohol%20syndrome>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=safeguarding%20unborn%20child>

Crises occurring / Overdose

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=Wenickers%20encephalopathy>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=alcohol%20intoxication>
- <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng58>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=drug%20overdose>

Medical complications of substance misuse including

- <https://www.addiction-ssa.org/knowledge-hub/substance-misuse-and-infectious-diseases/>
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663003/Shooting_Up_2017_report.pdf
- <https://www.gponline.com/drug-misuse-risks-intravenous-drug-use/sexual-health/hiv/article/966970>
- <https://dualdiagnosis.org/drug-addiction/iv-drug-use/>

Blood borne viruses (BBV) (hepatitis B and C, and HIV), endocarditis

- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/blood-borne-viruses/what-are-bvv.htm>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=hepatitis+B>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=HIV>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=TB>
- [https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?om=\[%22ety%22:%22Guidance%22\]\]&q=Malnutrition+and+substance+abuse&sp=on](https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?om=[%22ety%22:%22Guidance%22]]&q=Malnutrition+and+substance+abuse&sp=on)
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=BBV>

Smoking

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=smoking>

Nasal and respiratory symptoms secondary to nasal substance (e.g. cocaine) use

- <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/cocaine/what-are-long-term-effects-cocaine-use>

Non-infective cardiac complications

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/215470/dh_129674.pdf
- <https://gpnotebook.com/simplepage.cfm?ID=x20070704125156295600>

Alcoholic liver and abdominal disease

- [https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?om=\[%7B%22ety%22:%22Guidance%22%7D\]&q=alcoholic%20liver%20disease&sp=on](https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?om=[%7B%22ety%22:%22Guidance%22%7D]&q=alcoholic%20liver%20disease&sp=on)
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=pancreatitis&sp=on>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=portal%20hypertension&sp=on>

Alcohol use contributing factor for cancer and hypertension

- <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/alcohol-and-cancer>
- <https://www.alcohol.org/effects/blood-pressure/>

Neurological complications

- <https://www.alzscot.org/sites/default/files/images/0000/0166/alcohol.pdf>
- <https://bjgp.org/content/bjgp/67/656/134.full.pdf>
- <https://www.foundationforpn.org/what-is-peripheral-neuropathy/causes/alcohol/>

Misuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medications

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=misuse%20of%20prescribed%20med&sp=on>

Polyabuse of drugs and combined misuse of drugs and alcohol

- <https://www.addictioncenter.com/addiction/polydrug-use/>
- <https://www.release.org.uk/poly-drug-use>

Dual Diagnosis

- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=Dual%20diagnosis>

Tolerance, dependence and withdrawal

- <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/blog/post/tolerance-dependence-addiction-whats-difference>
- https://www.safetypharmacology.org/AM2012/am12presentations/Markgraf_IntroPhysicalDependenceWD.pdf
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=drug%20tolerance>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drug-misuse-and-dependence-uk-guidelines-on-clinical-management>
- <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/health-protection/drug-misuse>
- <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg52/evidence/drug-misuse-opioid-detoxification-full-guideline-196515037>
- <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/search?q=drug%20withdrawal>