



Assessment Instruments for Substance Abuse and Dependence

Psychology 470

Introduction to Chemical Addictions

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Many Different Types

- Is conducted from many different perspectives
 - Medical
 - Legal
 - Psychological
 - Social
 - Substance Abuse
 - Others
- All have major roles in the assessment process
 - Instruments should be able to cover most components listed above
- Interview is a MANDATORY part of the process
 - Structured is better than non-structured

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Medical

- Many different analyses one can do
 - Liver functioning
 - Indicates a lot
 - Endocrine functioning levels
 - Neurological functioning
 - General neurological exam
 - Brain Scans
 - General Physical
 - Weight gain or loss, oral diseases, deviated septum, etc
- All tie into the assessment process

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Legal

- Does the client have legal problems?
 - If so, what?
 - Tie into the DSM categories
- Legal problems may be helpful in the treatment process

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Psychological

- Co-occurring disorders
 - May be contributing to the addiction process
 - Bi-polar clients often self-medicate
 - Depression often accompanies many substance disorders
- Mental Status
 - Is the client in the here and now
 - Hallucinations, Delusions?
 - Others

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Social

- Family problems?
- Employment Problems?
- Housing issues?
 - Rent
 - Homeless
- All play major roles
- Any family support mechanisms in place?
- Any community support mechanisms in place

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Substance Use/Abuse

- What is the client using
 - Major differences between some types of compounds
- Duration
 - 1 week vs. 10 years
- Level of use
 - How much per day / week / month
- Is the client high right now
 - Breathalyzers
 - Urinalysis testing
 - Tracks

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Instruments to Use

- Depends on the context
- Must be reliable and valid
- How long does it take to administer and score
- How much does it cost to administer
 - Cost of the instrument
 - Cost of the person making the assessment
 - Cost of the person on the witness stand.
 - Can be very expensive
- Does it have a follow-up version
- Has the person been trained to administer the instrument
- Other issues

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Instruments

- Many types
- Many have minimal reliability or validity
- Good instruments
 - ASI
 - SUDDS

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Addiction Severity Index (ASI)

- Most widely used assessment instrument
- Is a semi-structured interview
- Two time frames:
 - Lifetime
 - Last 30 days
- Has follow-up versions
 - Can be used for treatment planning

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ASI Domains

- Medical
- Employment
- Alcohol
- Drug
- Legal
- Family/Social
- Psychiatric
- Outputs include:
 - Interviewer severity ratings
 - Composite scores (mathematically-derived indices)

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Multiple Measures

- Alcohol/Drug Use Patterns (quantity/frequency and symptoms)
- Problems
 - Negative consequences
 - Co-occurring problems
- Cognitive/Psychological Variables
 - Relapse risk
 - Coping and self-efficacy
 - Motivation

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Use Patterns

- Calendar method gives most exact baseline measure
- Easily repeated during and after treatment
- Provides clinically useful information:
 - Antecedents
 - Consequences
 - Peak drinking/drug use (tolerance)

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Versions

- Has multiple versions
 - Native American
 - Women
 - Others

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Substance Use Diagnostic Schedule (SUDDS)

- Has 99 items
- Is a 35-40 minute structured interview Takes 10 – 15 minutes to score by hand, <1 minute by computer which gives a good printout.
- Yields information for DSM diagnosis
- Can be administered via a book or computer
- Need to be trained to administer

- Very good for chemical dependent and dual diagnosis clients.

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Adolescent Problem Severity Index (APSI)

- Is a structured interview
- Designed to identify and respond to adolescent problems
- Seven functioning areas
 - Legal, family, drug/alcohol use, others
- Provides composite score
- Provides severity of scores in each area
- Can be scored by hand

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Conclusions

- Many types of assessment tests
- Sometimes need to use a variety of test and tie them all in together.
- Best to use instruments, interview, and other information
- Must result in a valid substance diagnosis that can hold up in court.
 - Is the gold standard

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