



Can you differentiate between
CASUAL DRINKING AND CONCERNING HABITS?"

Test your knowledge on the difference between patients with low-risk patterns of alcohol use, patients at risk for alcohol use disorder (AUD) and patients with diagnosable AUD? Explore clues from Kathryn's* most recent primary care appointments.



AUD is underdiagnosed and undertreated.¹

Alcohol use may not always appear clinically significant at first glance. Notably, a recent study found that ~90% of all individuals at elevated risk for AUD were undiagnosed.¹

Kathryn | 48-year-old female

Professional, presenting to primary care

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*Not an actual patient.



Kathryn | 48-year-old female

Professional, presenting to primary care

Clinical snapshot

- +** **Visit type:** Follow-up visit to discuss sleep issues mentioned at a recent annual exam
- 🚩** **Chief complaints:** Poor sleep
- 📄** **Medical history:** No previously diagnosed psychiatric disease, no prior SUD treatment, no current medications (takes supplements); menses remain regular
- 👨👩** **Family history:** Mother (alive)—GAD; brother (alive)—obstructive sleep apnea
- 🧑** **Height:** 1.62 m | **Weight:** 69 kg | **BMI:** 26.3 kg/m²
- ❤️** **Blood pressure:** 124/79 mmHg | **Heart rate:** 82 bpm
- 🩺** **Physical exam:** Unremarkable

📄 INFORMATION COLLECTED BEFORE THE VISIT

MOOD

- PHQ-9: 4 points | GAD-7: 4 points

LABS

- CBC, CMP, HbA1c, lipid panel, vitamin D—within normal limits

SUBSTANCE

- No tobacco, cannabis, or illicit substance use; consumes alcohol

AUDIT-C

- 4 (positive at-risk screen for a woman)²

🩺 INFORMATION COLLECTED DURING THE VISIT

SYMPTOM EVOLUTION

- Patient notes frequent fatigue with associated low mood; symptoms have led to impaired occupational functioning and a strain in family relationships (patient is married with 3 adult children)

SLEEP

- Reports trouble staying asleep; wakes up several times starting around 2am

SUBSTANCE USE

- Consumes a glass or two of wine after work to unwind due to the high-stress nature of her job
- Expresses mild guilt when asked about drinking; reports drinking more on the weekends (2-3 mixed drinks/day) to cope with the stress of the week and sleep disturbances; reports alcohol consumption has remained stable over several years

Does Kathryn have AUD? Find out on the next page.

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Kathryn has **MILD AUD**, defined by presence of 2-3 symptoms as per DSM-5 diagnostic criteria³



Consider how Kathryn's drinking patterns may relate to her clinical presentation:

DSM-5 criteria³

Alcohol use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by alcohol

Continued use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused by the effects of alcohol

Recurrent alcohol use resulting in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home

Key Takeaways

- People across all walks of life are vulnerable to developing problematic drinking patterns and alcohol-related harms⁴
- Mild AUD is defined by fewer diagnostic criteria and may be associated with less obvious functional impairment, which can make it more difficult to recognize in clinical practice^{3,5}
- In patients like Kathryn, asking questions to uncover patterns of alcohol use and considering how these may relate to the broader clinical picture may provide additional context to inform the management of AUD⁶

Relevant information in the case

- Frequent fatigue with associated low mood
- Sleep disturbances
- Mild guilt when asked about drinking may indicate growing awareness of its potential impact
- Strain in family relationships
- Impaired occupational functioning

Having open conversations with your patients about their relationship with alcohol can help you identify AUD before symptoms worsen.

**Expand your knowledge of AUD with more patient cases on the [Lilly Medical website](#).
Can you see the whole picture?**

AUDIT-C=Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test–Consumption. BMI=body mass index. CBC=complete blood count. CMP=comprehensive metabolic panel.
DSM-5=Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5. GAD-7=Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7. HbA1c=hemoglobin A1c. PHQ-9=Patient Health Questionnaire-9. SUD=substance use disorder.

References

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