

A review of the psychometric properties of the CRAFFT instrument: 1999-2011

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Alcohol (AUD) and other substance use disorders (SUD) are common among adolescents. The CRAFFT (Car, Relax, Alone, Forget, Friends, Trouble, 1999) was developed as a brief screening instrument for adolescents to measure AUD and SUD. This systematic review examines the psychometric properties of the CRAFFT. A systematic review was performed using Cochrane Database for Systematic Reviews, Pubmed/Medline, Embase (1980 to 2011), PsycInfo, and Google Scholar using the keywords "CRAFFT", "CRAFFT questionnaire", "alcohol misuse", "alcohol abuse", "alcohol dependence", "alcohol", "substance misuse", and "substance abuse" and "substance dependence". We report 12 studies on validity and six studies on reliability. Populations examined were clinic patients including hospital-based clinic patients, primary care patients, emergency room patients, Native-Americans, sexually transmitted diseases clinic patients, substance users, prenatal patients, a general population group, and enlisting military conscripts. In general, the CRAFFT was found to be a good screening instrument for gradations of alcohol and substance misuse including problem use, abuse, and dependence. At optimal cut-points, sensitivities of the CRAFFT ranged from 0.61 to 1.00, and specificities ranged from 0.33 to 0.97. The CRAFFT showed modest to adequate internal consistency values ranging from 0.65 to 0.86, and high test-retest reliability. The CRAFFT has adequate psychometric properties for detecting AUD and SUD in adolescents. However, more studies of the psychometric properties of the CRAFFT need to be carried out to further assess and improve generalizability to other populations. Gender and ethnic differences also require further examination, as do versions that are adapted for different languages and cultures.

Biography

Dr. Shayesta Dhalla received her PhD (2010), MHS (2005) in Epidemiology and her MD (1994) from the University of British Columbia. Since 2010, she has worked as a Research Associate at the University of British Columbia. She is the author of several peer-reviewed articles in high-impact journals. She is a reviewer for many journals including AIDS and Behavior and AIDS Care, and is on the editorial board of the Journal of Bioanalysis and Biomedicine. She is the recipient of many honours and awards throughout her career, including from the University of British Columbia and the Harvard School of Public Health. She has been invited to several important international conferences, and has both poster and oral presentations to her name. She is currently serving as a guest editor for Current HIV Research, and is also co-organizing a Advances in Vaccines conference to be held at Whistler, British Columbia (Canada) in March 2012.

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