

**Defining and Describing Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD)**

**Craving  
 Consequences  
 Loss of Control**

**Context:** AUD is any pattern of drinking that results in impairment or distress. Recognizing and stratifying acutely-ill patients can be a challenge.

**Current:** The 3Cs model (Craving, Consequences, loss of Control) can help.

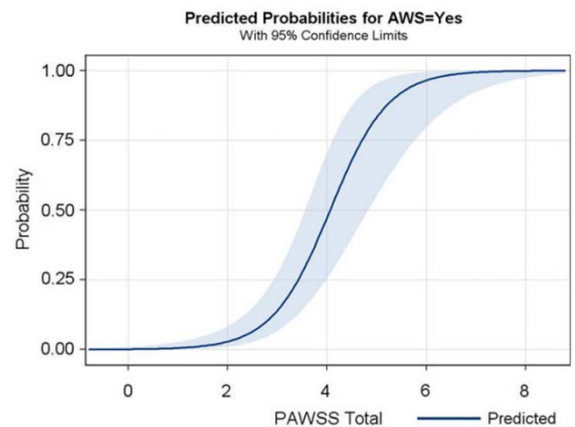
**Cutting edge:** Avoid stigmatizing language (such as dependence, abuse, alcoholic, addict, clean/dirty) and instead discuss AUD in terms of recovery or recurrence of symptoms.

**Predicting Withdrawal**

**Context:** Most patients with AUD will have mild or no withdrawal during hospitalization.

**Current:** The PAWSS tool can help identify patients at high risk for withdrawal with high sensitivity (93.1%) and specificity (99.5%) and has been validated for use in medically ill patients.<sup>1</sup>

**Cutting Edge:** Conceptualize kindling as a process by which a seizure or other brain event is initiated and its recurrence made more likely. Kindling can ignite an adrenergic storm, resulting in manifestations of withdrawal such as DTs, seizures, and hallucinations.

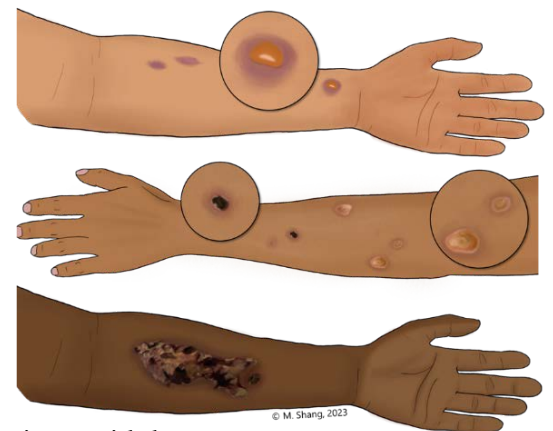


**Xylazine**

**Context:** Xylazine is an  $\alpha$ -2 adrenergic and kappa opioid agonist that causes CNS depression. It is not approved for human consumption.

**Current:** It is increasingly infiltrating the unregulated opioid drug supply in the U.S. labeled an “emerging threat” by the Office of National Drug Control Policy.<sup>2</sup> Patients may not be aware of potential xylazine exposure.

**Cutting Edge:** Treat for xylazine withdrawal based on clinical suspicion. Naloxone should still be used for xylazine-associated overdoses in addition to rescue breaths. Screen patients for xylazine-associated wounds and ensure that you link patients with harm reduction services, xylazine test strips to test their supply prior to consumption, and start wound treatment early as they can heal with regular wound care.



References:

1. Maldonado JR, Sher Y, Das S, Hills-Evans K, Frenklach A, Lolak S, Talley R, Neri E. Prospective Validation Study of the Prediction of Alcohol Withdrawal Severity Scale (PAWSS) in Medically Ill Inpatients: A New Scale for the Prediction of Complicated Alcohol Withdrawal Syndrome. *Alcohol Alcohol*. 2015 Sep;50(5):509-18. doi: 10.1093/alcalc/aggv043. Epub 2015 May 21. PMID: 25999438.
2. Allcroft H, Heiman E, Butner JL. Clinical progress note: Xylazine use and its sequelae. *J Hosp Med*. 2024 Aug;19(8):713-715. doi: 10.1002/jhm.13338. Epub 2024 Apr 1. PMID: 38561251.