

PURPOSE:

This policy serves as guidance for the treatment of Alcohol Withdrawal when transferring patients previously treated under inpatient or ED CIWA Scale.

The Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment for Alcohol–Revised (CIWA-Ar) is an objective means of assessing alcohol withdrawal that can then be utilized in treatment protocols. Implementation of the CIWA-Ar scale reduces risks of alcohol withdrawal including life-threatening events such as seizures and delirium tremens.

STAKEHOLDERS:

Aspirus MedEvac RN's and Paramedics

POLICY / CONTENT / PROCEDURAL STEPS:

Aspirus MedEvac maintains compliance with CIWA monitoring and medication dosing per sending facility. This policy serves as a resource to ensure proper indication for medication administration and proper dosing. CIWA Ar Scale is as follows:

Nausea/Vomiting

Ask 'Do you feel sick to your stomach? Have you vomited?'

No nausea and no vomiting	0
Mild nausea and no vomiting	1
(More severe symptoms)	2
(More severe symptoms)	3
Intermittent nausea with dry heaves	4
(More severe symptoms)	5
(More severe symptoms)	6
Constant nausea, frequent dry heaves and vomiting	7

Tremor

Have arms extended and fingers spread apart

No tremor	0
Not visible, but can be felt fingertip to fingertip	1
(More severe symptoms)	2
(More severe symptoms)	3
Moderate, with patient's arms extended	4
(More severe symptoms)	5
(More severe symptoms)	6
Severe, even with arms not extended	7

Paroxysmal Sweats

No sweat visible	0
Barely perceptible sweating, palms moist	1
(More severe symptoms)	2
(More severe symptoms)	3
Beads of sweat obvious on forehead	4
(More severe symptoms)	5

(More severe symptoms)	6
Drenching sweats	7

Anxiety

Ask, 'Do you feel nervous?'

No anxiety, at ease	0
Mildly anxious	1
(More severe symptoms)	2
(More severe symptoms)	3
Moderately anxious, or guarded, so anxiety is inferred	4
(More severe symptoms)	5
(More severe symptoms)	6
Equivalent to acute panic states as seen in severe delirium or acute schizophrenic reactions	7

Agitation

Normal activity	0
Somewhat more activity than normal activity	1
(More severe symptoms)	2
(More severe symptoms)	3
Moderately fidgety and restless	4
(More severe symptoms)	5
(More severe symptoms)	6
Paces back and forth, constantly thrashes	7

Tactile Disturbances

Ask, 'Have you any itching, pins and needles sensations, any burning, any numbness, or do you feel bugs crawling on or under your skin?'

None	0
Very mild itching, pin and needles, burning, or numbness	1
Mild itching, pin and needles, burning, or numbness	2
Moderate itching, pin and needles, burning, or numbness	3
Moderately severe hallucinations	4
Severe hallucinations	5
Extremely severe hallucinations	6
Continuous hallucinations	7

Auditory Disturbances

Ask, 'Are you more aware of sounds around you? Are they harsh? Do they frighten you? Are you hearing anything that is disturbing to you? Are you hearing things you know are not there?'

Not present	0
Very mild harshness or ability to frighten	1
Mild harshness or ability to frighten	2
Moderate harshness or ability to frighten	3
Moderately severe hallucinations	4
Severe hallucinations	5
Extremely severe hallucinations	6
Continuous hallucinations	7

Visual Disturbances

Ask 'Does the light appear to be too bright? Is its color different? Does it hurt your eyes? Are you seeing anything that is disturbing to you? Are you seeing things you know are not there?'

Not present	0
Very mild sensitivity	1

Mild sensitivity	2
Moderate sensitivity	3
Moderately severe hallucinations	4
Severe hallucinations	5
Extremely severe hallucinations	6
Continuous hallucinations	7

Headache/Fullness in Head

Ask 'Does your head feel different? Does it feel like there is a band around your head?' Do not rate for dizziness or lightheadedness. Otherwise, rate 'severity.'

Not Present	0
Very mild	1
Mild	2
Moderate	3
Moderately severe	4
Severe	5
Very severe	6
Extremely severe	7

Orientation/Clouding of Sensorium

Ask 'What day is this? Where are you? Who am I?'

Oriented, can do serial additions	0
Can't do serial additions or is uncertain about date	1
Disoriented for date by no more than 2 calendar days	2
Disoriented for date by more than 2 calendar days	3
Disoriented to place or person	7

Dosing:

- **Lorazepam dosing *acquire from sending facility**
- CIWA = 6 to 11: Lorazepam 1mg PO or 1mg IV/IM/IO
 - Hold if BP less than 90/60 or respiratory rate less than 12.
Note: medication is recommended even in mild withdrawal. Hold if symptoms no longer meet any of these criteria.
- CIWA = 12 to 17: Lorazepam 2mg IV/IM/IO
 - Hold if BP less than 90/60 or respiratory rate less than 12
- CIWA scores 17 to 20: Lorazepam 3 - 4 mg IV/IM/IO.
 - Hold if BP less than 90/60 or respiratory rate less than 12. Dilute with equal volume NS and give over 3 minutes.
- CIWA greater than 20: 4 mg IV/IM/IO and call provider/medical control
 - Hold if BP less than 90/60 or respiratory rate less than 12. Dilute with equal volume NS and give over 3 minutes.

CONVERSION for drugs carried by MedEvac:

1mg Lorazepam = 2.5mg Midazolam

1mg Lorazepam = 5mg Diazepam

Documentation:

Documentation of CIWA scale and dosing should be completed in EMS CHARTS Narrative, Activity Log, and Medication Administration. Include CIWA scale number in notes section of medication administration.

REFERENCES:

Knight E, Lappalainen L. (September, 2017) Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment for Alcohol-Revised might be an unreliable tool in the management of alcohol withdrawal. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5597013/#:~:text=The%20Clinical%20Institute%20Withdrawal%20Assessment,frequently%20used%20by%20family%20physicians.>

Sellers, E., M. (2023). CIWA-Ar for alcohol withdrawal. Retrieved from: <https://www.mdcalc.com/calc/1736/ciwa-ar-alcohol-withdrawal>