

## **Medical Management of Alcohol Use Disorder in Pregnancy and the Peripartum Period**

### **ASAM – April 26<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Case 1:**

28-year-old G2P1 woman at 28 weeks gestation with history of alcohol use disorder, anxiety presents to ED with complaints of tremors, restlessness, nausea. She reported using 6–8 standard drinks daily until three days prior when she decided to stop drinking due to concerns for her baby. Symptoms began 12 hours after cessation and progressively worsened. BAL < 10, UDS negative.

She has a history of uncomplicated withdrawal, blackouts; denies struggling with use of other substances and doesn't combine alcohol with other substances. No previous substance rehab treatment.

#### Physical Examination

- ◆ General Appearance: Anxious, restless, diaphoretic.
- ◆ Vital Signs: BP 142/88 mmHg, HR 108 bpm, RR 20/min, Temp 37.5°C, SpO2 98% on room air.
- ◆ Neurological: Coarse tremors in both hands, hyperreflexia, no nystagmus, no signs of focal neurological deficits.
- ◆ Abdominal Exam: Non-tender, gravid uterus consistent with 28 weeks gestation. Normal fetal heart rate (FHR) at 145 bpm.

#### **Case 2:**

A 33-year-old woman with a history of alcohol use disorder and generalized anxiety disorder currently on escitalopram 10mg presents to the office as a hospital discharge referral. She reports she was recently hospitalized for observation for 24hrs due to alcohol withdrawal; she had uncomplicated symptoms and has no history of complicated withdrawal. She reports a binge-pattern of use starting in adolescence, usually drinking 5-10 glasses of wine at a time a few nights per week. She reports a stretch of sobriety of about 1 mo in her 20s and otherwise 2-3 week stretches a few times per year; in the last 4 months she has been drinking daily. She has never tried to quit or had treatment, and she reports she is very scared by the withdrawal. She reports a desire for treatment but plans to become pregnant soon and is wondering about her options for treatment.

#### **Case 3:**

A 36-year-old female is admitted to the medical floor for management of alcohol withdrawal. Her admission CIWA was 16 and she received 20 mg of IV diazepam in the emergency room, now improved to a CIWA of 8. A urine hcg suggests pregnancy, which she was not aware of. Her kidney and liver function are wnl. Chart review suggests a ~7-year history of alcohol use disorder, severe, with several prior admissions for complicated withdrawal, including ICU stay for seizure and autonomic instability ~2 years ago. She has intermittently engaged with outpatient addiction treatment. She has had trials of both naltrexone (including vivitrol) and acamprosate without significant benefit.

## **Prediction of Alcohol Withdrawal Severity Scale (PAWSS)**

Maldonado et al, 2015

### **Part A: Threshold Criteria:**

Has the patient consumed any amount of alcohol (i.e., been drinking) within the last 30 days?  
OR Did the patient have a "+" BAL on admission?

IF the answer to either is YES, proceed with test:

### **Part B: Based on patient interview: (1 point for each YES)**

1. Have you been recently intoxicated/drunk, within the last 30 days?
2. Have you ever undergone alcohol use disorder rehabilitation treatment or treatment for alcoholism? (i.e., in-patient or out-patient treatment programs or AA attendance)
3. Have you ever experienced any previous episodes of alcohol withdrawal, regardless of severity?
4. Have you ever experienced blackouts?
5. Have you ever experienced alcohol withdrawal seizures?
6. Have you ever experienced delirium tremens or DT's?
7. Have you combined alcohol with other "downers" like benzodiazepines or barbiturates, during the last 90 days?
8. Have you combined alcohol with any other substance of abuse, during the last 90 days?

### **Part C: Based on clinical evidence: (1 point for each YES)**

1. Was the patient's blood alcohol level (BAL) on presentation  $\geq 200$ ?
2. Is there evidence of increased autonomic activity? (e.g., HR  $> 120$  bpm, tremor, sweating, agitation, nausea)

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: Maximum score = 10. This instrument is intended as a SCREENING TOOL. The greater the number of positive findings, the higher the risk for the development of AWS. A score of  $\geq 4$  suggests HIGH R/SK for moderate to severe (complicated) AWS.

## Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment of Alcohol Scale, Revised (CIWA-Ar)

### **Nausea/Vomiting**

- 0 - None
- 1 - Mild nausea with no vomiting
- 2
- 3
- 4 - Intermittent nausea
- 5
- 6
- 7 - Constant nausea and frequent dry heaves and vomiting

### **Tremors**

- 0 - No tremor
- 1 - Not visible, but can be felt fingertip to fingertip
- 2
- 3
- 4 - Moderate, with patient's arms extended
- 5
- 6
- 7 - severe, even w/ arms not extended

### **Anxiety**

- 0 - no anxiety, patient at ease
- 1 - mildly anxious
- 2
- 3
- 4 - moderately anxious or guarded, so anxiety is inferred
- 5
- 6
- 7 - equivalent to acute panic states seen in severe delirium or acute schizophrenic reactions

### **Agitation**

- 0 - normal activity
- 1 - somewhat normal activity
- 2
- 3
- 4 - moderately fidgety and restless
- 5
- 6
- 7 - paces back and forth, or constantly thrashes about

### **Paroxysmal Sweats**

- 0 - no sweats
- 1 - barely perceptible sweating, palms moist
- 2
- 3
- 4 - beads of sweat obvious on forehead
- 5
- 6
- 7 - drenching sweats

### **Orientation and clouding of sensorium -**

- 0 - Oriented
- 1 - cannot do serial additions or is uncertain about date
- 2 - disoriented to date by no more than 2 calendar days
- 3 - disoriented to date by more than 2 calendar days
- 4 - disoriented to place and / or person

### **Tactile disturbances**

- 0 - none
- 1 - very mild itching, pins & needles, burning, or numbness
- 2 - mild itching, pins & needles, burning, or numbness
- 3 - moderate itching, pins & needles, burning, or numbness
- 4 - moderate hallucinations
- 5 - severe hallucinations
- 6 - extremely severe hallucinations
- 7 - continuous hallucinations

### **Auditory Disturbances**

- 0 - not present
- 1 - Very mild harshness or ability to startle
- 2 - mild harshness or ability to startle
- 3 - moderate harshness or ability to startle
- 4 - moderate hallucinations
- 5 - severe hallucinations
- 6 - extremely severe hallucinations
- 7 - continuous hallucinations

### **Visual disturbances**

- 0 - not present
- 1 - very mild sensitivity
- 2 - mild sensitivity
- 3 - moderate sensitivity
- 4 - moderate hallucinations
- 5 - severe hallucinations
- 6 - extremely severe hallucinations
- 7 - continuous hallucinations

### **Headache**

- 0 - not present
- 1 - very mild
- 2 - mild
- 3 - moderate
- 4 - moderately severe
- 5 - severe
- 6 - very severe
- 7 - extremely severe