

Box 6

Risk Level	Intervention	AUDIT score*
Zone I	Alcohol Education	0-7
Zone II	Simple Advice	8-15
Zone III	Simple Advice plus Brief Counseling and Continued Monitoring	16-19
Zone IV	Referral to Specialist for Diagnostic Evaluation and Treatment	20-40

*The AUDIT cut-off score may vary slightly depending on the country's drinking patterns, the alcohol content of standard drinks, and the nature of the screening program. Clinical judgment should be exercised in cases where the patient's score is not consistent with other evidence, or if the patient has a prior history of alcohol dependence. It may also be instructive to review the patient's responses to individual questions dealing with dependence symptoms (Questions 4, 5 and 6) and alcohol-related problems (Questions 9 and 10). Provide the next highest level of intervention to patients who score 2 or more on Questions 4, 5 and 6, or 4 on Questions 9 or 10.

Brief interventions for hazardous and harmful drinking constitute a variety of activities characterized by their low intensity and short duration. They range from 5 minutes of simple advice about how to reduce hazardous drinking to several sessions of brief counseling to address more complicated conditions³⁶. Intended to provide early intervention, before or soon after the onset of alcohol-related problems, brief interventions consist of feedback of screening data designed to increase motivation to change drinking behaviour, as well as simple advice, health education, skill building, and practical suggestions. Over the last 20 years procedures have been developed that primary care practitioners can readily learn and practice to address hazardous and harmful drinking. These procedures are summarized in Box 7.

A number of randomized controlled trials have evaluated the efficacy of this approach, showing consistently positive benefits for

Box 7**Elements of Brief Interventions**

- Present screening results
- Identify risks and discuss consequences
- Provide medical advice
- Solicit patient commitment
- Identify goal- reduced drinking or abstinence
- Give advice and encouragement