

Market Need: Approximately 6% of the adult population in North America have alcohol use disorder. Although there are several treatment options available, less than 7% of adults with alcohol use disorder seek and receive treatment. Impaired awareness of alcohol misuse, including problem minimization and failure to recognize the severity of its consequences, is identified as one of the principal barriers to help-seeking and adherence to treatment. Alcohol misuse is the fifth leading cause of premature death and disability worldwide and 6% of all global deaths are attributable to alcohol consumption. Improving awareness of alcohol misuse may help avoid delays in seeking treatment, improve treatment adherence, reduce morbidity, mortality, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. Although influential, the true prevalence of impaired illness awareness or illness denial in persons with alcohol misuse and their impact on medication adherence and treatment outcomes requires further study. To accomplish this, a valid, reliable measure is required to accurately assess impaired awareness of alcohol misuse is needed. The aim was to develop an easy-to-use self-report scale to measure impaired awareness of alcohol misuse that would have the capability to detect small changes in illness awareness and assess the multidimensionality of insight into illness in this condition.

Technology Description: Our scientists have developed a novel and easy to administer self-report measure of illness awareness in alcohol misuse. The measure assesses the core domains of illness awareness, including general illness awareness, accurate attribution of symptoms, awareness of the need for treatment, and awareness of negative consequences. With 10-point Likert scales for each item, this scale has the capacity to detect small changes in illness awareness.

Stage of Development: Investigators are currently validating the scale and conducting tests for reliability. The scale will be validated in English and potentially other languages for wider use. Upon validation, the inventor plans to create an electronic version, which will facilitate data storage for research studies and clinical use.

Advantages:

- Specific to the quantitative assessment of impaired illness awareness or illness denial
- A user-friendly tool with the capacity to detect small changes in illness awareness scores with the use of 10-point Likert scales for each item
- Provides a set of questions specific to alcohol misuse that are within the niche of understanding patient awareness of their illness
- Offers a screening mechanism to determine which patients are most suitable for medication adherence programs or interventions to enhance illness acceptance and medication adherence.

Business Opportunity: CAMH is leading the development and commercialization of this scale. We are seeking partnerships with pharma, biotech, and hospitals who may be interested in licensing this scale for use in clinical trials and patient assessment.