WHAT IS ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE AND ABUSE?

A maladaptive pattern of drinking that leads to at least two of the following problems or impairments occurring within a 12-month time period:

A. **Tolerance**—Need for increasingly larger amounts of alcohol to reach desired effects and/or diminished effect when using the same amount

B. **Withdrawal**—Uncomfortable and, possibly, dangerous physiological and psychological effects when trying to stop drinking abruptly; alcohol (or a closely related substance, such as a benzodiazepine) is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms

C. **Impaired control**—Inability to resist temptation to drink or to limit quantities of alcohol when drinking

D. **Neglect of activities**—Important occupational, family, social, and recreational activities limited or avoided because of drinking

E. **Wasted time**—A significant amount of time devoted to obtaining, using, or recovering from the effects of alcohol

F. **Hazardous use**—Drinking to the point that self and others are endangered

G. **Continued use despite prior problems**—Persistent use of alcohol despite significant problems or getting into trouble when using in the past

H. **Compulsion**—Craving alcohol when not drinking


**ORIGINS**

It was the dry season. A parched autumn trailed the scorching summer along the vast and ancient African savannah. The only clouds to darken the skies were smoke-like swarms of locusts that devoured the rare remnants of the desiccated grasses and the scatterings of seeds that had been spared by the relentless, consuming wildfires. Starving and emaciated, she hid her skeletal brood in the shadows of their yawning cave and, once more, braved forward on her interminable search for food.

Beyond the hushing locusts, the dry, empty air carried no sounds of life—only those of her blistered feet as they beat a grim rhythm against the baked, barren, dusting clay: dry and empty, dry and empty, dry and empty.

Spurred by hunger, she ventured ever deeper into the vast dryness. Suddenly, behind a massive termite mound, she saw it: a patch of green wetness stitched within the quilt of beiges and browns. And near the center of the patch was a date palm that had relinquished about its roots copious quantities of its amber treasure.

With racing heart and moistening lips she hastened toward the mound. But, just as suddenly, she paused. Blending fear and desire, a novel ache drained her brimming hope. Was a lion lurking behind the termite tower, or did it melt...
HEALTH-RELATED CONSEQUENCES OF ALCOHOL ABUSE

1. **Neuropsychiatric disorders**: epilepsy, dementias, polyneuropathy, essential tremor, fetal alcohol syndrome, depression/suicide, psychotic illnesses, panic disorder, sleep disorders, traumatic brain injury, violent behaviors

2. **Cardiovascular and blood-related disorders**: myocardial infarction, arrhythmias, hypertension, cardiomyopathy, anemia, pulmonary embolus, stroke

3. **Gastrointestinal disorders**: pancreatitis, cirrhosis, hepatitis, gallstones, gastritis, stomach ulcer, duodenal ulcer

4. **Cancer**: oral, tongue, pharyngeal, laryngeal, esophageal, stomach, duodenal, breast, colon, and rectal cancers

5. **Metabolic and hormonal disorders**: diabetes, gout, sexual dysfunctions, testicular atrophy, gynecomastia (in men), osteoporosis

6. **Skin disorders**: seborrheic dermatitis, urticaria, psoriasis, premature aging

7. **Infectious and inflammatory disorders**: a vast array of bacterial and viral infections—including sexually-communicated diseases—and rheumatoid arthritis

FREQUENTLY ABUSED PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

- **Barbiturates**: amobarbital (Amytal), pentobarbital (Nembutal), phenobarbital (Luminal), secobarbital (Seconal)
- **Benzodiazepines**: alprazolam (Xanax), chlordiazepoxide (Librium), clonazepam (Klonopin), diazepam (Valium), flunitrazepam (Rohypnol), lorazepam (Ativan), oxazepam (Serax), triazolam (Halcion)
- **Nonbenzodiazepine sedatives**: eszopiclone (Lunesta), zaleplon (Sonata), zolpidem (Ambien)
- **Opiates**: morphine, codeine, hydrocodone (Vicodin), oxycodone (OxyContin), methadone, fentanyl, meperidine (Demerol), and many, many mixtures containing these medications under various trade names

PARTNERSHIP FOR BCM CALENDAR OF EVENTS

You won’t want to miss any of the exciting educational and social events we have planned for the new season of The Partnership for Baylor College of Medicine. For more information, please contact partnership@bcm.edu or 713-798-5460.

EDUCATIONAL LUNCHEON SERIES

All luncheons are on Tuesdays from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Junior League of Houston. Speakers and topics are subject to change. Tickets are $35 online and $40 at the door.

**January 20, 2015**
*The Beat of My Heart: Cardiovascular Research Institute*
Dr. Biykem Bozkurt, Dr. Mary Dickinson and Dr. Xander Wehrens

**March 10, 2015**
*Conquering Cancer: New Frontiers in Treatment*
Dr. Kent Osborne, Dr. Matthew Ellis, and Dr. Michael Coburn,

**May 19, 2015**
*Matters of the Brain: Neurodegeneration*
Dr. Huda Zoghbi, Dr. Melissa Yu, and Dr. Stephen Sigworth

GRAND ROUNDS TOURS

**February 12, 2015, 2 p.m.**
*Baylor St. Luke’s Medical Center Surgery Viewing*
Dr. Todd K. Rosengart

**April 17, 2015, 10 a.m.**
*Sense and Sensibility: Jan and Dan Duncan Neurological Research Institute*
Dr. Huda Zoghbi, Dr. Hugo Bellen, Dr. Joshua Shulman and Barbara Cochran

SPRING FUNDRAISING GALA

**May 1, 2015**
Gala event benefiting the new Lung Institute at Baylor College of Medicine

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invisibly within the quilt’s thorny fringes? Perhaps a wily leopard blended into the shadows of the palm’s lofty green. Cagey carnivores, both, waiting patiently to feast on a desperate primate.

For a few unbearable seconds, as her anxiety flooded to fear, she did not move—her fathomless hunger pitted against the terrifying unknown. As this struggle stormed within her, she also understood that to pause, even briefly, on this desiccated plain was to invite certain death.

Neither betrayings of branches nor shiverings of leaves unveiled the crouching cats. Contrasting with this silent stillness was the gnawing, groaning ache that now knotted her shrunken belly. Courage waning, she abruptly turned and raced back to her ravenous offspring. The ache of uncertainty overpowered her cramping, famished belly.

On this long-forgotten day along the ancient, arid African plain, your ancestor and her wasting babies went unfed—as did the predators lying in ambush in the tree and behind the baking termite mound. That she decided and acted rapidly—and correctly—is why you exist today. Her genetic code that you carry is also why you know anxiety. And you feel it in your gut whenever you pause in conflict.

**THE AM I STUCK? SCALE**

**Part 1: Taking Score of Yourself**
For each of these questions, answer yes (y) or no (n).

1. Am I stuck in making the decision to leave a destructive relationship (e.g., accepting abuse, accepting belittlement, compromising my values)?  yes  no

2. Am I stuck in making the decision to stop a bad habit that endangers my health (e.g., smoking, overeating, drinking excessively, taking drugs, risk taking)?  yes  no

3. Am I stuck in making the decision to stop compulsive behaviors or procrastinating habits that waste my time (e.g., Internet surfing, hours on Facebook, excessive TV watching, gambling, video games, sexual addictions, pornography seeking, compulsive shopping)?  yes  no

4. Am I stuck in making the decision not to lie, break the law, or break rules (e.g., lying, compulsive exaggerating, drinking and driving, stealing, illegal betting, taking drugs)?  yes  no

5. Am I stuck in making the decision to stop hurting others (e.g., being overly critical, misleading, demeaning, unfaithful, insensitive, mean, exploitative, negativistic, abusive, prejudiced)?  yes  no

6. Am I stuck in making the decision to stop diminishing, demeaning, hurting, and/or hating myself (e.g., being self-critical, submissive, passive, insecure, pessimistic, irritable)?  yes  no

7. Am I stuck in making the decision to pursue and engage an optimal life partner (e.g., looking my best, acting my best, getting out, networking, making “the effort,” taking “the risk,” making “the commitment”?  yes  no

8. Am I stuck in making the decision to use my time constructively (e.g., improving my mind, my body, my health, and the lives of others)?  yes  no

9. Am I stuck in making the decision to protect my body and enhance my health and safety (e.g., eating a healthful diet, exercising regularly, driving safely, getting into psychotherapy, avoiding physical and mental risks, attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings)?  yes  no

10. Am I stuck in making the decision to improve my mind and advance my career (e.g., studying hard, working hard, doing my best, attending classes, completing assignments, preparing for tests, attending college or graduate school, maintaining a positive attitude, risking career changes)?  yes  no

11. Am I stuck in making the decision to be honest and live honestly (e.g., telling the truth, attending religious services, managing anger, assisting others, volunteering, avoiding bad influences, making new friends)?  yes  no

12. Am I stuck in making the decision to treat others fairly and respectfully (e.g., being thoughtful, being kind, expressing appreciation, thanking, apologizing, compensating, remediating)?  yes  no

13. Am I stuck in making the decision to treat myself fairly and with respect at all times (e.g., being positive, pleasing myself, acknowledging my successes, acknowledging my abilities, accepting compliments, accepting gifts, forgiving myself, rewarding myself appropriately)?  yes  no

This scale may be administered to others by substituting “Are you” for “Am I,” “your” for “my,” and “yourself” for “myself.”

*Continued on page 4*
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Lloyd and Amy Kirchner

The Am I Stuck? Scale continued from page 3

Part 2: Calculating Your Am I Stuck? Score

A. For each “yes” answer in Part 1, write the number (in parentheses) that most closely correlates with the length of time that you have been stuck in making the respective decision:

- 6 months (1)
- 6 months to 2 years (2)
- 2–5 years (3)
- More than 5 years (4)

The number in parentheses constitutes your score for each item for which you replied “yes.”

B. To total your Am I Stuck? score, add the numbers in parentheses.

Examples:
- If you were stuck with item 3 for 5 years (4 score) and item 9 for 3 years (3 score), your total score is 7.
- If you were stuck with item 1 for 1 year, your total score is 2.

C. Rating yourself on the basis of your total Am I Stuck? score.

0: You are not stuck in pause and would not likely have a great deal to gain personally from reading and applying the principles in “Fatal Pauses: Getting Unstuck Through the Power of No and the Power of Go.”

1–2: You are, minimally, stuck in a partial pause and most likely can benefit from reading and applying the principles in this book.

3: You are stuck in pause and will benefit from reading and applying the principles in this book.

4: or more: You are stuck in fatal pause, or a protracted pause. This means that unless you do something definitive to change your situation, you will not achieve your potential or feel fulfilled or be happy. You are also likely, unwittingly, to affect your loved ones in ways that are not positive. You owe it to yourself and to your loved ones to read and apply the principles in this book.