

Semi-Structured Assessment for the Genetics of Alcoholism (SSAGA-II)

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The SSAGA-II was designed to assess the physical, psychological, and social manifestations of alcohol abuse or dependence and other psychiatric disorders. It is a polydiagnostic instrument that assesses somatization disorder, alcohol, nicotine, marijuana and drug abuse/dependence, anorexia, bulimia, adult attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, depression, mania, dysthymia, antisocial personality disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, panic, agoraphobia, social phobia, and obsessive-compulsive disorder using DSM-III-R and DSM-IV and at least one other of the following diagnostic systems: Feighner RDC (Research Diagnostic Criteria), and ICD-10. Many disorders can be scored for DSM-III diagnosis as well. The SSAGA-II also covers general demographic information, medical history information, information about tobacco use, and suicide attempts, and it contains a psychosis screener to identify individuals requiring clinical followup for diagnosis. The SSAGA has the interviewer plot a "life chart" of diagnoses to elaborate on comorbidity, the course of the respondent's substance use as this relates to other psychiatric problems.

A specification manual has been written for the SSAGA to clarify items, and in cases where paraphrasing is necessary, so that the interviewer is aware of the intent of a specific question. The manual gives a general overview of the instrument, including coding principles and conventions.

TARGET POPULATION

- Adults
- Adolescents (over 16 years)

Groups for which this instrument might be especially helpful?

Companion interviews include the C-SSAGA-C (for children ages 7 to 12), the C-SSAGA-A (for adolescents ages 13 to 17) and a parent interview (the C-SSAGA-P).

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Number of items: 45 multipart

Number of subscales:

Format(s): Pencil-and-paper self-administered

Interview (structured)

Observation

Computer self-administered

Other

Time required for administration: *Depends on psychopathology present:
45 minutes for unaffected individual,
up to 4 hours for extremely affected individuals*

Administered by: *Structured interview by nonclinician with review by clinician*

Training required for administration? yes no

Comments: *Interviewer training of 1 week required.*

SCORING

Time required to score/interpret: *Hand scoring of alcohol section using DSM-IV
should take 5 to 7 minutes*

Scored by: *Interviewer*

Scoring key? yes no

Computerized scoring or interpretation available? yes no

Norms available? yes no

Instrument normed on subgroups? yes no

PSYCHOMETRICS

Have reliability studies been done? yes no

What measure(s) of reliability was used?

Test-retest

Split half

Interrater

Have validity studies been done? yes no

What measures of validity have been derived?

Content

Criterion (predictive, concurrent, "postdictive")

Construct

CLINICAL UTILITY OF INSTRUMENT	<p>The SSAGA-II has been specifically designed to study, in detail, alcoholism and associated comorbid psychiatric diagnoses. Both current status (e.g., recency of problems) and “lifetime” (e.g., age of onset of problems and conditions) status are assessed.</p> <p>The age of onset and the age of recency of problems are obtained throughout the interview. Ideally, patterns of use and frequencies of specific symptoms will identify potential problem areas to target for prevention/intervention efforts. However, SSAGA-II as a diagnostic instrument was not designed with a treatment focus in mind. SSAGA-II can subtype alcoholism with comorbid conditions (drug abuse/dependence, major depression, and antisocial personality disorder) to act as a guide in treatment matching, substance counseling, family counseling, etc. The questions in SSAGA-II may help unaffected individuals understand some of the difficulties that may result when alcohol/substance abuse or dependence has occurred.</p>
RESEARCH APPLICABILITY	<p>The SSAGA is a polydiagnostic interview (DSM-III-R, DSM-IV, ICD-10) with an emphasis on substance use and co-related diagnoses. It assesses common psychiatric disorders prevalent in a general population, and occurring with greater frequency in alcoholics and substance abusers and their families. Special attention is paid to the interrelationship of substance use and psychiatric diagnoses. Because SSAGA-II is a comprehensive interview, it could be used in other types of studies where substance abuse is common, but is not necessarily the main focus of the study.</p>
SOURCE, COST AND COPYRIGHT ISSUES	<p>Copyright: <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p>Cost: <i>Public domain</i></p> <p>Source: <i>Copies of the SSAGA may be obtained from:</i> Victor Hesselbrock, Ph.D. Department of Psychiatry, MC-2103 University of Connecticut, School of Medicine Farmington, CT 06030-2103 E-mail: hesselb@psychiatry.uhc.edu</p>
SOURCE REFERENCES	<p>Hesselbrock, M., Easton, C., Bucholz, K.K., Schuckit, M. & Hesselbrock, V. (1999). A validity study of the SSAGA—a comparison with the SCAN. <i>Addiction</i>, 94(9), 1361-1370.</p> <p>Bucholz, K.K., Cadoret, R., Cloninger, C.R., et al. (1994). Semi-structured psychiatric interview for use in genetic linkage studies: A report on the reliability for the SSAGA. <i>Journal of Studies on Alcohol</i>, 55(2), 149-158.</p>
SUPPORTING REFERENCE	<p>Schuckit, M.A., Anthinelli, R.M., Bucholz, K.K., et al. (1995). Time course of development of alcohol-related problems in men and women. <i>Journal of Studies on Alcohol</i>, 56(2), 218-225.</p>