

ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL SEVERITY

TABLE 1. Alcohol Withdrawal Severity.

| Severity Category | Associated CIWA-Ar Range* | Symptom Description |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| <i>Mild</i> | CIWA-Ar < 10 | Mild or moderate anxiety, sweating and insomnia, but no tremor |
| <i>Moderate</i> | CIWA-Ar 10-18 | Moderate anxiety, sweating, insomnia, and mild tremor |
| <i>Severe</i> | CIWA-Ar \geq 19 | Severe anxiety and moderate to severe tremor, but not confusion, hallucinations, or seizure |
| <i>Complicated</i> | CIWA-Ar \geq 19 | Seizure or signs and symptoms indicative of delirium – such as an inability to fully comprehend instructions, clouding of the sensorium or confusion – or new onset of hallucinations |

*Throughout this document, we provide examples for withdrawal severity using the CIWA-Ar, although other scales can be used. Regardless of the instrument used, there is a wide variety in the literature and in practice as to which scores best delineate mild, moderate and severe withdrawal. Classification of withdrawal severity is ultimately up to the judgment of clinicians and the choice of reference range may be based on their particular patient population or capabilities.

ASAM CPG on Alcohol Withdrawal Management, 2019.