DELIRIUM SCREENING AND DETECTION

The Confusion Assessment Method (CAM)

OVERVIEW:
The Confusion Assessment Method (CAM) was originally developed in 1988-1990 to improve the identification and recognition of delirium. The CAM is consistent with the DSM-IV criteria for delirium. It was designed for both clinical and research applications to provide a standardized method for non-psychiatrarily trained health professionals to identify delirium quickly and accurately.

AUTHORS/PRIMARY REFERENCE:

STRUCTURE OF THE TOOL:
The most basic form of the CAM comprises four items, each reflecting a cardinal feature of delirium:

1) Acute onset
2) Inattention
3) Disorganized thinking
4) Altered level of consciousness

A positive finding for delirium requires the presence of items 1 and 2, and either 3 or 4.

BASE OF EVIDENCE/PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES:
- Sensitivity – 74-93% (95% confidence interval)\(^1\)
- Specificity – 87-96% (95% confidence interval)\(^1\)
- Inter-Rater Reliability – \(\kappa=1.00\) (for presence/absence of delirium), \(\kappa=0.93\) (for all 4 CAM items)\(^1\)

TARGET POPULATION AND SETTING:
- Confused older people in hospital
- Inpatient Acute Units
- Emergency Departments

INTENDED USER(S):
- Medical, nursing staff, and other clinicians – training is recommended for optimal use
- An instruction manual is available on-line (see below in “Where to get the CAM”)

NOTES ON USING THE CAM:
- Administration of the CAM takes 5-10 minutes
- It is recommended that the CAM be combined with formal cognitive assessment such as the Mini-Cog Test\(^3\) and digit span test
- The CAM has been translated into Chinese, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, and Turkish

WHERE TO GET THE CAM:
- An on-line training manual containing the CAM is available at:
  http://www.hospitalelderlifeprogram.org/private/cam-disclaimer.php?pageid=01.08.00
- The CAM is a copyrighted tool. It can be reproduced for clinical and research use provided the following acknowledgement is made:


  Confusion Assessment Method: Training Manual and Coding Guide, Copyright © 2003, Hospital Elder Life Program, LLC.

REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL READING:

Updated May 6 2012