

Confusion Assessment Method (CAM[®])

What is the Confusion Assessment Method or CAM[®]?

The Confusion Assessment Method (CAM[®]) is a standardized evidence-based tool that enables non-psychiatric trained clinicians to identify and recognize delirium quickly and accurately in both clinical and research settings.¹ Time to administer CAM is about 5 to 10 minutes.

Population the CAM[®] Serves

CAM[®] is for older adults in acute, sub-acute and long term settings, hospitalized adults, adults with acute illness, and ICU patients.²

Importance of CAM[®]

The CAM[®] instrument assesses the presence, severity, and fluctuation of 9 delirium features: acute onset, inattention, disorganized thinking, altered level of consciousness, disorientation, memory impairment, perceptual disturbances, psychomotor agitation or retardation, and altered sleep-wake cycle.

Psychometric Properties

For studies including older adults, the results indicate sensitivity of 0.94-1.00, specificity of 0.90-0.95⁴ and high inter-rater reliability 0.81-1.0.³

Cut-Off Scores

The CAM diagnostic algorithm is based on four cardinal features of delirium: 1) acute onset and fluctuating course, 2) inattention, 3) disorganized thinking, and 4) altered level of consciousness.³ A diagnosis of delirium according to the CAM requires the presence of features 1, 2, and either 3 or 4.^{2,3}

Resources

1. McCabe D. The Confusion Assessment Method (CAM). Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing. Consult Geri. Try This: Series. 2019. Accessed November 1, 2023
<https://hign.org/consultgeri/try-this-series/confusion-assessment-method-cam>.
2. Inouye SK. The Confusion Assessment Method (CAM) training manual and Coding Guide. American Delirium Society. January 2020. Accessed November 1, 2023
https://americandeliriumsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/CAM-Long_Training-Manual.pdf
3. Wei LA, Fearing MA, Sternberg EJ, Inouye SK. The Confusion Assessment Method: a systematic review of current usage. *J Am Geriatr Soc*. 2008;56(5):823-830. doi:10.1111/j.1532-5415.2008.01674.x
4. Oh ES, Fong TG, Hsieh TT, Inouye SK. Delirium in Older Persons: Advances in Diagnosis and Treatment. *JAMA*. 2017;318(12):1161-1174. doi:10.1001/jama.2017.12067
5. Inouye SK, Kosar CM, Tommet D, et al. The CAM-S: development and validation of a new scoring system for delirium severity in 2 cohorts. *Ann Intern Med*. 2014;160(8):526-533. doi:10.7326/M13-1927

Video explaining more information about the CAM:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGmp32-l5rg>

Links to Test:

1. [Confusion Assessment Method for the ICU \(CAM-ICU\)](#)
2. [SHORT CONFUSION ASSESSMENT METHOD \(SHORT CAM\)](#) ^{5**}
3. [ED Delirium<!-- bCAM Calculator « EdDelirium →](#)

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