

Understanding the Treatment Needs of Women with Alcohol Use Disorder

Increased Health Risks

Compared to men, women with AUD have increased health risks including: cognitive decline, cancer, liver disease, sexual violence, & mental health issues. ^{1,2}

Treatment Gap

Due to unequal access to treatment services, only 15% of women with AUD seek treatment compared to 22% of men. ³

Common Barriers

Women face additional challenges due to stigma, lack of AUD screening, limited childcare services, transportation difficulties, mental health issues, lack of women oriented-care, and male-dominant information. Barriers can be exacerbated for those in rural or remote locations.

Societal Inequality

Racial, gender, and sexual minority women face additional barriers to treatment due to increased stigma and discrimination.

Treatment Recommendations



Implement Universal Screening

To identify AUD cases early and decrease stigma about discussing drinking habits.



Build Client-Clinician Relationships

To improve treatment engagement and retention.



Provide Education Opportunities

To increase healthcare provider awareness about AUD presentation & treatment in women.



Consider Pharmacotherapy as an Option

Where appropriate, to allow women to receive treatment at home.



Offer Accessible Childcare Services

To increase women's participation in treatment programs.



Develop Community-Specific Approaches

To provide culturally-safe and inclusive care specifically designed for Indigenous clients and minority populations.



Expand Virtual Practices

To increase treatment accessibility for all women.



Improve Managed Alcohol Programs

To focus on and better support women's needs.

References

1. Fama, R., Le Berre, A. P., & Sullivan, E. V. (2020). Alcohol's unique effects on cognition in women: A 2020 (re)view to envision future research and treatment. *Alcohol Research: Current Reviews*, 40(2), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.35946/arc.v40.2.03>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Excessive Alcohol Use is a Risk to Women's Health.
3. McCrady, B. S., Epstein, E. E., & Fokas, K. F. (2019). Treatment interventions for women with alcohol use disorder. *Alcohol Research: Current Reviews*, 40(2), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.35946/arc.v40.2.08>