**Family Tree Questionnaire (FTQ):**

**Assess Family History of Alcohol Problems**

**Brief Description:**

The **Family Tree Questionnaire (FTQ) for Assessing Family History of Alcohol Problems** is a brief, easily administered questionnaire which can be used to assess family history of alcohol problems. The questionnaire provides subjects with a consistent set of cues for identifying blood relatives with alcohol problems by using a family tree diagram for relatives. The reliability of paternal and maternal first–degree (siblings, parents) and second–degree (grandparents, uncles, aunts) relatives of alcoholic and nonalcoholic subjects were examined. Results indicated that both alcoholic and nonalcoholic subjects can reliably classify their relatives as alcoholics or problem drinkers over a 2-week test-retest interval.

**Target populations:**

Adult drinker populations.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES:**

**Number of items:** Number of responses depends on the number of first and second generation relatives.

**Number of scales:** Not applicable.

**Formats:** Pencil and paper self–administered

Interviewer administered

**Time required for administration:** It takes about 5 minutes to complete.

**Administered by:** Researcher or clinician or self-administered by the subject/client.

**Training required for administration:** No.

**Comments**: None.

**scoring:**

**Time required to score / to interpret:** 2-3 minutes to count the number of family history positive and family history negative relatives.

**Scored By:** On the Family Tree Questionnaire subjects are asked to classify their **Blood relatives** on their mother’s and father’s side of the family into one of the following categories: (1) **NEVER DRANK**: a person who never consumed alcoholic beverages (i.e., a lifelong abstainer; teetotaler); (2) **SOCIAL DRINKER:** a person who drinks moderately and is not known to have (or have had) an alcohol problem; (3) **POSSIBLE PROBLEM DRINKER:** a person who you believe or were told might have (had) an alcohol problem, but whom you are not certain actually had an alcohol problem; (4) **definite problem drinker:** only for persons who either are known to have received treatment for an alcohol problem (including being a regular member of Alcoholics Anonymous), or who have experienced several alcohol–related consequences; (5) **no relative:** only applicable for categories with brothers and sisters; and (6) **don’t know/don’t remember**..

**Scoring Key:** No.

**Computerized scoring or interpretation available:** No.

**Norms available:** Not applicable.

**Have reliability studies been done?** Yes.

**What measures of reliability were used?** Test–retest.

The test-retest reliability of the family tree method for assessing family history of alcohol problems appears satisfactory for clinical and research purposes. Using liberal criteria (i.e., relative known to be a problem drinker) provided a more sensitive basis for the diagnosis of relatives’ alcohol problems than more stringent criteria (i.e., relative definitely an alcoholic with reported consequences). The Family Tree Questionnaire has been shown to have satisfactory reliability with alcohol abusers and normal drinkers.

**Have validity studies been done?** Yes. Evidence for this questionnaire derives from the fact that alcohol abusers had a higher number of family history positive relatives than non-alcohol abusing subjects.

**What measures of validity were used?** Predictive.

**CLINICAL UTILITY OF INSTRUMENT:**

Family history of alcohol problems is an important variable in alcohol treatment and research. The Family Tree Questionnaire is a brief and easy to administer questionnaire which can be used to gather self-reports of subjects’ family history of first– and second–degree relatives’ history of alcohol related problems. Subjects classify relatives into one of several possible drinker groups ranging from total lifelong abstainers to definite problem drinkers.

**research applicability:**

The instrument can be used in research studies to gather subjects’ reports of their first– and second–degree relatives’ history of alcohol–related problems. The instrument has recently been used with naturally recovered subjects to help them recall their family history of problems.

**Source:**

**Copyright**: Yes, but no charge for use.

**Cost:** No charge for use.

**Source:** Available from Linda C. Sobell, Ph.D., ABPP

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(Home page for the Guided Self-Change Clinic)

**Cost/Source of Computerized Scoring:** Not applicable.

**Source:** Available from Linda C. Sobell, Ph.D., Addiction Research Foundation, 33 Russell Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S1, Canada; Phone: 416-595-6044/6002/6683; Fax: 416-595-6617.

**REFERENCES:**

**Original Source Reference:**

Mann, R. E., Sobell, L. C., Sobell, M. B., & D., P. (1985). Reliability of a family tree questionnaire for assessing family history of alcohol problems. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, *15*, 61-67. **Original source article.**

**Other Psychometric Data:**

Vogel-Sprott, M. D., Chipperfield, B., & Hart, D. M. (1985). Family history of problem drinking among young male social drinkers: Reliability of the family tree questionnaire. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, *16*, 251-256.

**Selected Applications:**

Worobec, T. G., Turner, W. M., O’Farrell, T. J., Cutter, H. S., Bayog, R. D., & Tsuang, M. T. (1990). Alcohol use by alcoholics with and without a history of parental alcoholism. *Alcoholism*, *14*, 887-892.

Sobell, L. C., Sobell, M. B., & Toneatto, T. (1992). Recovery from alcohol problems without treatment. In N. Heather, W. R. Miller, & J. Greeley (Eds.), *Self-control and the addictive behaviours* (pp. 198-242). New York: Maxwell MacMillan.

Hodgins, D. C. & Shimp, L. (1995) Identifying adult children of alcoholics: Methodological review and a comparison of the CAST-6 with other methods. *Addiction*, *90,* 255-267.