



Drug Evaluation Network System

Volume 1, Issue 2

November 2003

DENS Goes Statewide

DENS implemented statewide in three states

Michelle Boss
Site Specialist

Since the last newsletter, our team has been busy working with different states who are interested in using the DENS Software. Making DENS a statewide system means that individual states can be sure that every treatment program in their state has access to the same software and same reports in a way that best suits that state.

The first state to approach the DENS team about a system like this was Delaware. During the month of June, DENS Site Coordinators traveled around the state of Delaware training and installing the software at 15 different sites that already use the ASI.

Then in July, Louisiana began to implement DENS as a statewide system. DENS staff members Miriam Ackerman and Jennifer Bower-Wisniewski traveled down to Louisiana to administer 4 one-day trainings to transition the state into using the DENS system.

Most recently, our team held a two-day training here at TRI with representatives from Wyoming on using DENS in treatment programs across their state.

All three of these states are very pleased with how the DENS software is helping to standardize the intake procedure for treatment programs all over their state. Who knows... maybe YOUR state will be next! ❖

A Look into the ASI's Future

New version of the Addiction Severity Index in development

Sam Rikoon
Site Specialist

The 5th edition Addiction Severity Index (ASI), currently the central data collection instrument in the DENS project, is undergoing revisions in preparation for a new version. Throughout its history, the ASI has been revised and updated periodically based upon feedback from both the clinical and research communities.

The new version will be more comprehensive and better structured, making it easier both to learn and administer. One example is the expanded "Drug Grid" (ASI 5 items D1-D13). In addition to the information already gathered, the ASI 6 will collect age of first use, and includes a 6-month time frame in addition to the 30-day and Lifetime items currently asked. Also, date of last use of alcohol/drugs will be assessed to provide information pertinent to withdrawal and relapse. These changes are being implemented partially through the incorporation of "skip" logic, which allows an interviewer to skip questions rendered irrelevant by responses to earlier items. The new design of the ASI allows counselors to complete a more clinically relevant intake assessment without increasing the time needed to administer it.

"All of the above is great," you are probably saying to yourself. "But when will the ASI 6 be available for use?" Great question! Right now, the ASI 6 is undergoing pilot testing in several different treatment modalities. Once this is complete, the results will be reviewed and the instrument retested to ensure it is both reliable and valid. The current ASI will continue to be the standard for at least the next two years. But watch out! 2005 may be the year of ASI 6! ❖

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Please email newsletter comments and questions to acamilleri@tresearch.org

ASI Coding Tips

Tips on completing more accurate ASIs

Amy Camilleri
Quality Assurance Coordinator

After your program's data is sent to DENS, it undergoes a battery of tests to help identify miscodes. In turn, we will use this newsletter to help you complete accurate ASIs. Here are the top 10 potential coding issues (and remedies) for the data collected between July and September 2003:

1. *Client is paid for working all 30 of the past 30 days.*

Question #: E11

Remedy: Probe to make sure the client worked Monday-Friday, in addition to weekends. Most "full-time" jobs are worked on weekdays, in which case the correct E11 code would be '20.' Try to code the actual number of days worked in the past 30.

2. *Clinician reports client's misrepresentation of responses and/or an inability to understand ASI Items.*

Question #s: M10 & M11, L31 & L32, E23 & E24, D34 & D35, F37 & F38, P22 & P23

Remedy: Make sure you have definitive proof (e.g. a criminal record or toxicology results) that the client misrepresented the majority of the section in order to code these items as "yes". This question is not intended to flag a client in denial and consequently, if you cannot prove that the client is not being honest, code as "no".

3. *Client reports receiving no money from pensions in the employment section but reports getting medical or psychiatric pension in other ASI sections.*

Question #s: E15, M5a, P3

Remedy: Cross-check the client's responses (if they are still present), and re-code the ASI to facilitate agreement among sections. If M5a or P3 > 0, then E15 must be greater than zero.

4. *Clinician codes the "class" field as a follow-up interview rather than an intake.*

Question #: G8

Remedy: Most ASIs done for the DENS study will be coded as "Intake". ASIs done on or near admission are intakes even if the client has been in the treatment program before. Follow-up ASIs are generally completed by interviewers completing follow-up studies.

5. *Lifetime usage of substances before age 10.*

Question #s: D1-D13

Remedy: Probe further to make sure that the client was using regularly (3x per week or more) for at least 6 months prior to age 10 in order to count as one year of regular use.

6. *Client reports more than 17 drug treatment episodes in his/her lifetime*

Question #s: D20

Remedy: Only include drug-related treatment episodes. Include detox, halfway houses, in/outpatient treatment, & NA (if 3 or more meetings in one month). Exclude psychiatric and medical treatments. Also, if a client moves straight from inpatient to outpatient treatment, without any breaks, this is coded as ONE treatment episode.

7. *No medical problems reported in past 30 days, yet client reports being bothered or needing treatment.*

Question #s: M6, M7, & M8.

Remedy: Probe further! A client cannot be bothered by non-existent problems. Also, remind the client that this question asks about any treatment needed in addition to what they may already be receiving.

8. *Client reports spending more than \$5000 on drugs in the past 30 days.*

Question #: D24

Remedy: Count only actual money spent (cash out of pocket) on drugs in the past 30 days. The intent of the question is to ascertain the financial burden caused by drug use.

9. *Client reports more than 21 alcohol treatment episodes in his/her lifetime*

Question #s: D20

Remedy: Only include alcohol-related treatment episodes. Include detox, halfway houses, in/outpatient treatment, & NA (if 3 or more meetings

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DENS SUPPORT

The Drug Evaluation Network System support staff operates Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM EST. When calling, please specify your name, and the facility from which you are calling.

All Site Specialists and Coordinators are able to answer questions about computer problems, data transfer, ASI coding, training, and study procedures.

DENS SITE SPECIALISTS AND COORDINATORS

All Site Specialists and Coordinators may be reached via the DENS Toll-Free Support Helpline: 1-877-TRI-DENS.

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**DENS TOLL-FREE SUPPORT
HELPLINE: 1-877-TRI-DENS**

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in one month). Exclude psychiatric and medical treatments. Also, if a client moves straight from inpatient to outpatient treatment, without any breaks, this is coded as ONE treatment episode

10. Client reports more than 20 medical hospitalizations.

Question #: M1

Remedy: Remind client you are looking only for the number of overnight hospitalizations, not the number of nights they spent in the hospital. Also, include only hospitalizations for medical ailments (including ODs and DTs requiring medical intervention, but NOT including detox, alcohol/drug/psychiatric treatment and childbirth with no complications). ❖

Comings and Goings...

Updates on the DENS staff

Miriam Ackerman
Site Specialist

The DENS team is sad to report the following "goings":

Anne McClintock, DENS Training Coordinator, will no longer be with us in the Philadelphia office. Anne has moved to Cleveland, OH, but is staying on as a DENS staff member, working from DENS' first out-of-state "satellite office." She is available through her DENS e-mail address: amclintock@tresearch.org.

Leslie Blue, a Quality Assurance Coordinator, has left DENS to work on her PhD full time.

Jennifer Bower-Wisniewski, Recruitment and User Support Coordinator, will be leaving October 31st to begin a career in civil service.

Also:

Meghan Love, Section Coordinator, will soon be on maternity leave. Contact director of program relations, Kathy Geary, in her absence.

Let's wish everyone good luck! As always, you may still contact the DENS staff at 1-877-TRI-DENS with any questions or concerns. ❖

DENS is Funded By the Office of National Drug Control Policy – Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center (ONDCP-CTAC)

DENOnline Gets a Facelift

Updates coming to the DENS Website

Miriam Ackerman
Site Specialist

The DENS website is going through some changes! In the coming months, if you point your web browser to www.densonline.org, you will notice some new things. In addition to a "new look," the website will include the most recent publications and presentations based on DENS data, a complete list of all of the other sites currently participating in DENS, and links to substance abuse treatment related websites that are good resources to assist you and your programs. The new and improved DENS website will also feature updated comparison reports from preliminary DENS findings and an electronic version of this newsletter. Make sure to add www.densonline.org to your "favorites," and check back often for new updates! ❖

Your Frequently Asked Questions

Your top support questions of the month

Jennifer M. Bower- Wisniewski
Recruitment and User Support Coordinator

Q: I can't get to a modem phone line and the software is warning me to modem. I am afraid that I am going to be locked out. What can I do?

A: There are a few things that you can do:

- **Has it warned you for the third time?** If not, you still have a short amount of time until the software will lock you out.
- **Is there a fax machine?** Traditional fax machines use non-digital phone lines as well. Use this phone line to modem. Don't forget to insert the plug back into the fax machine after you're done!
- **Do you have a floppy disk?** If you are truly unable to use a phone line, and you are locked out of the software, export the data onto a floppy disk and either send or email the file to your site coordinator. See your Fast Answers manual for full instructions.

Websites and Freebies

Free Resources

Jennifer M. Bower- Wisniewski
Recruitment and User Support Coordinator

In each newsletter, we will list interesting drug and alcohol related websites and resources.

<http://www.medscape.com/pages/public/publications> - Sample articles from journals- including some substance abuse related publications.

<http://www.jointogether.org/sa/news/> - National daily substance abuse news.

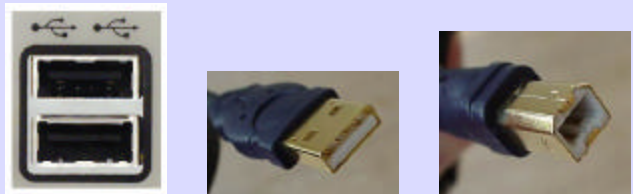
<http://www.jointogether.org/sa/action/dt/news/> -- Join Together's "Demand Treatment!" community news.

<http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/topics/ibulls.htm> - National Drug Intelligence Center- Bulletins and briefs about specific drug threats in the US.

<http://www.hcsm.org/sphereresources.htm> - Statewide Partnership for HIV Education in Recovery Environments- lots of neat booklets and cards to help counselors. ❖

Q: What is a USB plug?

A: USB, which stands for "Universal Serial Bus," is becoming the standard in connection methods - using USB plugs, or "connectors" that slide into USB ports. Instead of having different types of connectors for your floppy drive, mouse and printer, most items in stores have USB plugs. Normally, items like mice and floppy drives will have built-in cords with one "A" connector (see below) at the end. These



Left: 2 USB ports on a computer, Center: USB "A" connector, Right: USB "B" connector¹

devices are the easiest to connect since they have only one end to plug into the port on your computer. However, some items, such as printers will come with cords with an "A" connector on one end, and a "B" connector on the other. In this case, you may have to connect the "A" connector to the computer, and the "B" connector to the printer.²

^{1,2} "How USB Ports Work", HowStuffWorks (<http://www.howstuffworks.com>), by Marshall Brain. HowStuffWorks, Inc., 2003.

Crossword

DENS Software Functions

Jennifer M. Bower- Wisniewski
Recruitment and User Support Coordinator

We thought that it would be fun to include a crossword puzzle in this edition of the DENS newsletter. This puzzle will not only entertain, it will also test your knowledge of the DENS Software!

Small prizes will be awarded to the first ten people who mail or fax in a correctly completed crossword.

Send completed puzzles to:

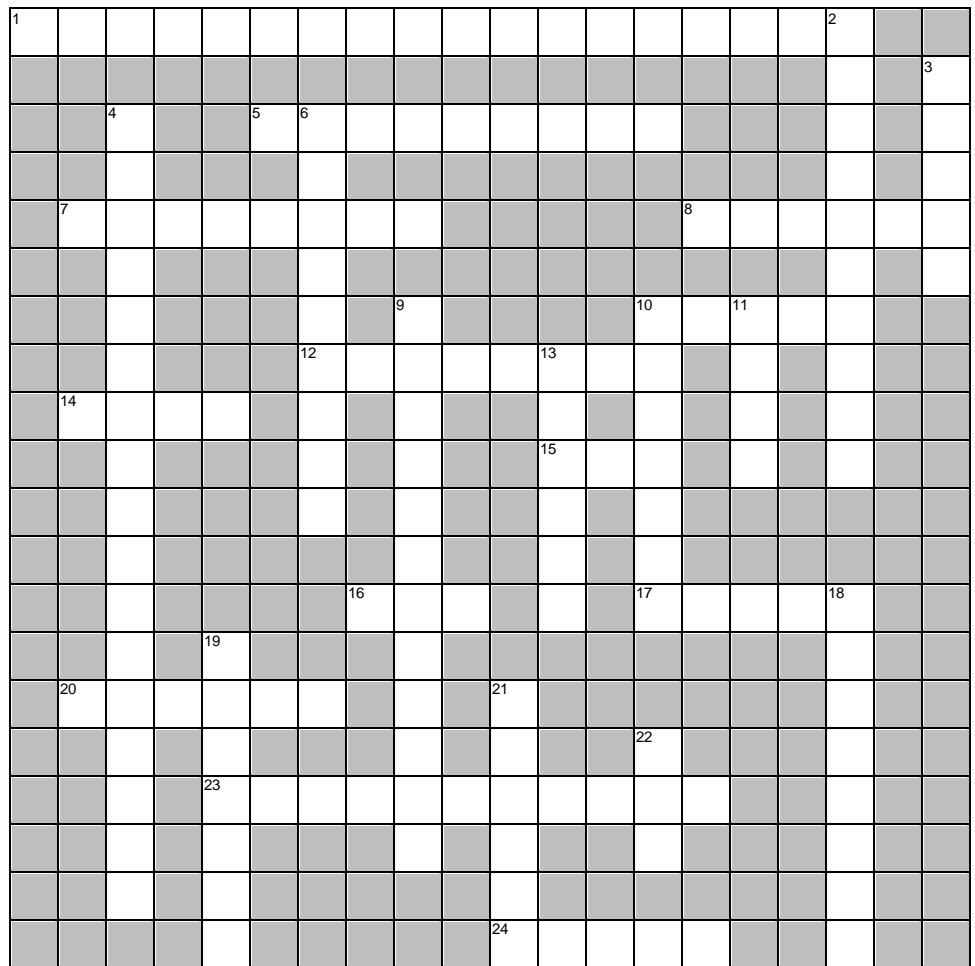
Via Mail:

Amy Camilleri
Quality Assurance Coordinator
Treatment Research Institute
600 Public Ledger Building
150 S. Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Via Fax:

Attn: Amy Camilleri
(215) 399-0987

Answers will be published in the next issue.



Created with EclipseCrossword — www.eclipsecrossword.com

Across

1. (Three words) This list of five options asks for the patient's input.
5. This report summarizes all of the client's information into a paragraph format.
7. After adding a user, you have to add _____.
8. The process in which you place your non-identifying data onto a floppy diskette.
10. Process in which you connect your computer to a phone line, and press "send to TRI".
12. Enter "fake" ASI cases into this mode.
14. Pressing F1 will activate this feature.
15. Abbreviation: Treatment Research Institute
16. Abbreviation: Social Security Number
17. This section's purpose is to document the client's adult legal, criminal history.
20. Software function that finds a past client.
23. (Two words) This section helps you gather basic information about your client's substance abuse history. Looks at "Use," not "Abuse" history.
24. This section determines the client's long term and recent psychological/emotional functioning.

Down

2. This section helps you gather basic information about the resources your client can record on a job application. It also records his/her current sources of income.
3. These are explanations and examples for each question.
4. (Three words) This report lists the client's trouble areas.
6. (Two words) This report is formatted in a question and answer style.
9. (Two words) This section determines the nature of the client's relationships or relationship problems
10. This section helps you gather basic information about your client's medical history.
11. Drug Evaluation Network System
13. In G8, this is coded for all patients, unless a follow-up study is being conducted.
18. Two periods of time are asked in the ASI: Past 30 days and _____.
19. (Two words) DENS Helpline: 1-877-____-_____.
21. Process in which you save your entire database onto a floppy diskette for future emergencies.
22. Abbreviation: Date of Birth