

NEUROLOGIC ASSESSMENT

TBIALT: Alteration of consciousness

1. CDE Variable	TBIALT = Alteration of Consciousness
2. CDE Definition	Period of time with an alteration of consciousness (not including LOC or PTA)
3. Recommended instrument for assessment	Self Report or Clinician Assessment; If clinically monitored, structured, sequential interviews recommended. Subjects generally use terms such as dazed, confused, seeing stars to describe.
4. Description of measure	Categorical or interval measurement; Recommended that source of verification, if available, be provided
5. Permissible values	0 to 24 hours; Source of verification: Not available; medical chart; clinical interview; witness; self-report.
6. Classification: Basic/Intermediate/Advanced	Identical
7. Procedure	Respondents/Patients self report or Clinician interview. Supplementary evidence helpful in establishing alteration of consciousness and its length.
8. Comments/Special instructions:	For individuals presenting for care after alteration of consciousness has resolved, establishing precise interval of either or both can be challenging. A period of confusion is often reported for individuals with mild TBI. Concussions often involve a period of confusion. These can be more closely monitored in sports venues where trainers and coaches can carefully observe players after injury and refer them for assessment. Active duty service members with concussion often frequently report a period of confusion, but stress reactions (including PTSD) may contribute. There is not an objective method of assessing unwitnessed alteration of consciousness. Though self-report is weaker evidence than clinical assessment during emergence from a period of confusion, a careful clinical interview supported by other sources when available is currently viewed as preferable to self-report alone. Alteration of consciousness other than a period of LOC and/or PTA is generally operationally defined as a period of disorientation or confusion. Some definitions include a period of being dazed. See Ruff et al for a discussion.
9. Rationale/justification:	A period of alteration of consciousness is a key measure in determining diagnosis of mTBI and its differentiation from more severe TBI. Self report is acceptable (CDC Report to Congress) but verification establishes higher level of evidence.
10. References:	CDC Report to Congress; WHO articles on mild TBI; ACRM criteria; DoD/DVA consensus definition; <i>Ruff RM, Iverson GL, Barth JT, et al. Recommendations for diagnosing a mild traumatic brain injury: A National Academy of Neuropsychology Education paper. Arch Clin Neuropsych. Feb 2009; 24(1):3-10. Epub 2009 Mar 17</i>