

Blantyre Coma Scale for Young Children

Overview: The Blantyre coma scale is a modification of the Glasgow coma scale suitable to use in preverbal children. The scale uses motor and crying responses to pain and includes the ability to watch. It can be used to assess young children with cerebral malaria.

Response	Findings	Score
best motor response	localizes painful stimulus (pressure with blunt end of pencil on sternum or supraorbital ridge)	2
	withdraws limb from painful stimulus (pressure with horizontal pencil on nail bed of finger or toe)	1
	no response or inappropriate response	0
best verbal response	cries inappropriately with painful stimulus or if verbal speaks	2
	moan or abnormal cry with painful stimulus	1
	no vocal response to painful stimulus	0
eye movement	watches or follows (e.g. mother's face)	1
	fails to watch or follow	0

Blantyre coma scale = (best motor response score) + (best verbal response score) + (eye movement score)

Interpretation:

- minimum score: 0 (poor)
- maximum score: 5 (good)
- abnormal: score ≤ 4

References:

Krishna WS Crawley J et al. Clinical features and outcome of severe malaria in Gambian children. Clin Infect Dis. 1995; 21: 577-587.

Molyneux ME Taylor TE et al. Clinical features and prognostic indicators in paediatric cerebral malaria: A study of 131 comatose Malawian children. Q J Med. 1989; 71: 441-459.