

Clinical Pain Assessment

Overview: Pain can be difficult for the patient to cope with and the clinician to monitor. A rating system allows for semi-quantitation which can be used over time to assess the adequacy of treatment and the progression of a patient's condition.

Pain Parameter	Finding	Rating
severity of pain	no pain reported	0
	only discomfort	1
	mild pain	2
	moderate pain	3
	severe pain	4
frequency of pain	no pain reported	0
	rarely has pain	1
	pain occurs one to several times per month	2
	pain occurs one to several times per week	3
	pain occurs one to several times per day	4
duration of pain	no pain reported	0
	pain rarely lasts more than a few minutes	1
	pain lasts minutes to hours	2
	pain lasts all day	3
	continuous	4
pain medication requirement	takes no pain medicines	0
	needs only aspirin or Tylenol	1
	needs narcotic one to several times per month	2
	needs narcotic one to several times per week	3
	needs narcotic every day	4

Interpretation:

- minimum score 0
- maximum score 16

- The assessment can become complex if look for incoherent patterns (for example no pain reported yet uses narcotics several times per week)

One possible (unpublished unassessed) grading scheme using score:

- no significant disability: ≤ 2
- minimal disability: 3-4
- mild disability: 5-7
- mild-to-moderate disability: 8-10
- moderate disability: 10 - 12
- moderate-to-severe disability: 13-14
- severe disability: 15-16

References

Barofsky I Cohen SJ Sugarbaker PH. Chapter 16: Selecting a quality of life assessment instrument: Standardized tests clinical assessments or custom-designed instruments. pages 239 - 249. IN: Wenger NK Mattson ME et al. Assessment of Quality of Life in Clinical Trials of Cardiovascular Therapies. Le Jacq Publishing Inc. 1984.

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