

The Abbey Pain Scale

For measurement of pain in patients who cannot verbalise

Use of the Abbey Pain Scale

The Abbey Pain Scale is best used as part of an overall pain management plan.

Objective

The Pain Scale is an instrument designed to assist in the assessment of pain in patients who are unable to clearly articulate their needs.

Ongoing assessment

The Scale does not differentiate between distress and pain, so measuring the effectiveness of pain-relieving interventions is essential.

Recent work by the Australian Pain Society recommends that the Abbey Pain Scale be used as a movement-based assessment. The staff recording the scale should therefore observe the patient while they are being moved, eg during pressure area care, while showering etc.

Complete the scale immediately following the procedure and record the results in the patient's notes. Include the time of completion of the scale, the score, staff member's signature and action (if any) taken in response to results of the assessment, eg pain medication or other therapies.

A second evaluation should be conducted one hour after any intervention taken in response to the first assessment, to determine the effectiveness of any pain-relieving intervention.

If, at this assessment, the score on the pain scale is the same, or worse, consider further intervention and act as appropriate. Complete the pain scale hourly, until the patient appears comfortable, then four-hourly for 24 hours, treating pain if it recurs. Record all the pain-relieving interventions undertaken. If pain/distress persists, undertake a comprehensive assessment of all facets of patient's care and monitor closely over a 24-hour period, including any further interventions undertaken. If there is no improvement during that time, notify the medical practitioner of the pain scores and the action/s taken.

Jenny Abbey
April, 2007

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How to use scale: While observing the patient, score questions 1 to 6.

Name of patient:.....

Name and designation of person completing the scale:.....

Date: **Time:**.....

Latest pain relief given was **at**hrs.

Q1. Vocalisation

eg whimpering, groaning, crying

Absent 0 Mild 1 Moderate 2 Severe 3

Q2. Facial expression

eg looking tense, frowning, grimacing, looking frightened

Absent 0 Mild 1 Moderate 2 Severe 3

Q3. Change in body language

eg fidgeting, rocking, guarding part of body, withdrawn

Absent 0 Mild 1 Moderate 2 Severe 3

Q4. Behavioural change

eg increased confusion, refusing to eat, alteration in usual patterns

Absent 0 Mild 1 Moderate 2 Severe 3

Q5. Physiological change

eg temperature, pulse or blood pressure outside normal limits, perspiring, flushing or pallor

Absent 0 Mild 1 Moderate 2 Severe 3

Q6. Physical changes

eg skin tears, pressure areas, arthritis, contractures, previous injuries

Absent 0 Mild 1 Moderate 2 Severe 3

Add scores for Q1 to Q6 and record here Total pain score

Now tick the box that matches the total pain score

0-2 no pain	3-7 mild	8-13 moderate	14+ severe
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Finally, tick the box which matches the type of pain

chronic	acute	acute on chronic
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Abbey J, De Bellis A, Piller N, Esterman A, Giles L, Parker D, Lowcay B.
The Abbey Pain Scale. Funded by the JH & JD Gunn Medical Research
Foundation 1998–2002.

