

Generic Pain Assessment Tools¹

Pain is an “unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described by the person in terms of such damage”, with chronic pain further defined as “pain which has persisted beyond normal tissue healing time”. The International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) and the European Federation of IASP Chapters (EFIC) indicate that one in five people suffer from moderate to severe pain, and that one in three are unable or less able to maintain an independent lifestyle due to their pain, which outlines the fundamental importance of assessing people with wounds for wound pain at every dressing change and between dressing changes as the person expresses pain experiences.

Unfortunately at this time there is no valid, reliable wound pain assessment tool, so we must revert to current valid generic uni-dimensional pain assessment tools such as:

- The Numeric Rating Score (NRS):
 - Simplest scale to use, no equipment needed
 - Ask the person to rate their pain intensity on a scale of 0-10, with 0 being ‘no pain’ and 10 being ‘the worst pain ever experienced’
 - Applicable for anyone over the age of 8 with adequate cognitive abilities
- The Visual Analogue Scale (VAS):
 - Use of a 10cm ruler with ‘no pain’ written at the 0cm mark and ‘worst pain ever’ written at the 10cm mark
 - Ask the person to place a mark on the scale to represent the severity of their pain
- The Verbal Rating Score (VRS):
 - List of adjectives that describe pain intensity, including no pain, mild, moderate, severe, and very severe
 - Used with adults to explain levels of pain intensity



Graphic of the NRS, VAS, and VRS Pain Scales (taken from Google Images)

- The Wong Baker FACES Pain Scale:
 - Six gender neutral faces, ranging from no pain to worst pain
 - Scored from 0-10
 - Can be used for children 4-18 to illicit information on pain intensity



Graphic of the Wong Baker Faces Pain Scale taken from Google Images

- The UCLA Department of Anesthesiology posted a Universal Pain Assessment Tool on their website (available at http://www.anes.ucla.edu/uclapainmanagement_ratingscales.php), which seems to combine validated tools such as the Wong Baker FACES Pain Scale, Visual Analogue Scale, Verbal Rating Score, and Activity Tolerance Scale, although this tool itself has not been validated. The tool is copyright (2009 - UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, Department of Anesthesiology & UC Regents), but also appears on various other websites, including the Methodist Hospital of San Antonio, Texas (©2010 Methodist Healthcare System of San Antonio, Ltd, L.L.P. 1209-13350), White Plains Hospital, and Charlevoix County Medical Control Authority State Model Protocol (for paramedic use only).

MODERATE

UNIVERSAL PAIN ASSESSMENT TOOL

This pain assessment tool is intended to help patient care providers assess pain according to individual patient needs. Explain and use 0-10 Scale for patient self-assessment. Use the faces or behavioral observations to interpret expressed pain when patient cannot communicate his/her pain intensity.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Verbal Descriptor Scale	NO PAIN	MILD PAIN	MILD PAIN	MODERATE PAIN	MODERATE PAIN	MODERATE PAIN	MODERATE PAIN	SEVERE PAIN	SEVERE PAIN	SEVERE PAIN	WORST PAIN POSSIBLE
WONG-BAKER FACIAL GRIMACE SCALE											
ACTIVITY TOLERANCE SCALE	NO PAIN	Alert Smiling	No humor serious flat CAN BE IGNORED	Furrowed brow pursed lips breath holding INTERFERES WITH TASKS	Wrinkled nose raised upper lips rapid breathing INTERFERES WITH CONCENTRATION	Wrinkled nose raised upper lips rapid breathing INTERFERES WITH CONCENTRATION	Wrinkled nose raised upper lips rapid breathing INTERFERES WITH CONCENTRATION	Slow blink open mouth INTERFERES WITH BASIC NEEDS	Slow blink open mouth INTERFERES WITH BASIC NEEDS	Slow blink open mouth INTERFERES WITH BASIC NEEDS	Eyes closed moaning crying BEDREST REQUIRED
SPANISH	NADA DE DOLOR	UNPOQUITO DE DOLOR	UNPOQUITO DE DOLOR	UN DOLOR LEVE	DOLOR FUERTE	DOLOR FUERTE	DOLOR FUERTE	DOLOR DEMASIADO FUERTE	DOLOR DEMASIADO FUERTE	DOLOR DEMASIADO FUERTE	UN DOLOR INSOPORTABLE
TAGALOG	Walang Sakit	Konting Sakit	Konting Sakit	Katamtamang Sakit	Matinding Sakit	Matinding Sakit	Matinding Sakit	Pinaka-Matinding Sakit	Pinaka-Matinding Sakit	Pinaka-Matinding Sakit	Pinaka-Matinding Sakit
CHINESE	不痛	轻微	轻微	中度	严重	严重	严重	非常严重	非常严重	非常严重	最严重
KOREAN	통증 없음	약한 통증	약한 통증	보통 통증	심한 통증	심한 통증	심한 통증	아주 심한 통증	아주 심한 통증	아주 심한 통증	최악의 통증
PERSIAN (FARSI)	بدون درد	درد ملایم	درد ملایم	درد معتدل	درد شدید	درد شدید	درد شدید	درد بسیار شدید	درد بسیار شدید	درد بسیار شدید	بدترین درد ممکن
VIETNAMESE	Không Đau	Đau Nhẹ	Đau Nhẹ	Đau Vừa Phải	Đau Nặng	Đau Nặng	Đau Nặng	Đau Thệt Nặng	Đau Thệt Nặng	Đau Thệt Nặng	Đau Đớn Tận Cùng
JAPANESE	痛みがない	少し痛い	少し痛い	いくらか痛い	かなり痛い	かなり痛い	かなり痛い	ひどく痛い	ひどく痛い	ひどく痛い	ものすごく痛い

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Pain can also be measured using a multi-dimensional approach, using such valid, reliable tools as the:

- Brief Pain Inventory, Short Form:
 - Developed for cancer pain assessment, but validated for non-cancer pain as well
 - Assesses severity of pain, impact of pain on daily function, location of pain, pain medications, pain relief in past 24 hours or past week, pain intensity
 - Has a gender neutral body outline to describe location of pain
 - Can be self administered or completed in an interview
 - Available at: <http://www.mdanderson.org/educationand-research/departments-programs-and-labs/departments-and-divisions/symptom-research/symptom-assessment-tools/brief-pain-inventory.html>

- Pediatric Pain Questionnaire:
 - Pain intensity measured using a VAS with happy and sad faces present
 - Gender neutral body outline to allow for description of location of pain
 - Assesses pain intensity based on the person's choice of colored crayon
 - 46 word descriptors to assess sensory, affective, and evaluative qualities of pain
 - For use with children aged 4-18
 - Available at www.pedsgl.org.

Many other valid, reliable uni and multi-dimensional pain assessment scale exist for populations that the aforementioned tools are of no value. Such tools have been placed in a chart below for reference if required.

Pain Assessment Tool	Population	Web Site/Reference
Neonatal Infant Pain Scale (NIPS)	Preterm and Term Infants	Lawrence J, Alcock D, et al. The development of a tool to assess neonatal pain. <i>Neonatal Network</i> . 1993; 12 (6 September): 59-66.
Premature Infant Pain Profile (PIPP)	Preterm and Term Infants	Stevens B, Johnston C, Petryshen P, et al. The premature infant pain profile: Development and initial validation. <i>The Clinical Journal of Pain</i> . 1996;12(1):13-22.
Revised Facial Expression, Leg Movement, Activity, Cry, and Consolability Pain Tool (r-FLACC)	Children 0-18 who cannot communicate or who are cognitively impaired	Voepel-Lewis T, Zanoliti J, Dammeyer J, et al. Reliability and Validity of the Face, Legs, Activity, Cry, Consolability Behavioral Tool in Assessing Acute Pain in Critically Ill Patients. <i>American Journal of Critical Care</i> . 2010;19(1):55-61.
Non-Communicating Children's Pain Checklist, revised (NCCPC-r)	Children 3-18 who cannot communicate or who are cognitively impaired	Breau LM, Finley GA, McGrath PJ, et al. Validation of the Non-Communicating Children's Pain Checklist - Postoperative Version. <i>Anesthesiology</i> . 2002; 96 (3), 528-535.
Behavioral Pain Scale (BPS)	Sedated, mechanically ventilated, critically ill persons	The John Hopkins Hospital PACU Behavioral Pain Rating Scale cited in Mateo OM, Krenzischek DA. A pilot study to assess the relationship between behavioral manifestations and self-report of pain in post-anesthesia care unit patients. <i>Journal of Post Anesthesia Nursing</i> . 1992;7(1): 15-21.
Critical Care Pain Observation Tool (CPOT)	Critically ill persons who cannot communicate	http://pointers.audiovideoweb.com/stcasx/il83win10115/CPOT2011-WMV .

		wmv/play.aspx
The Checklist of Non-Verbal Pain Indicators (CNPI)	Pain in acute care post op settings, cognitively impaired	Feldt KS. The checklist of nonverbal pain indicators (CNPI). Pain Management Nursing. 2000; 1(1): 13-21.
Pain Assessment in Advanced Dementia Scale (PAINAD)	Advanced dementia	http://www.mhpcn.ca/uploads/PAINAD.1276125778.pdf
Pain Assessment Checklist for Seniors with Limited Ability to Communicate (PACSLAC)	Seniors who cannot communicate	http://www.geriatricpain.org/Content/Assessment/Impaired/Pages/PACSLAC.aspx
DOLOPLUS2 Scale	Mild – moderate cognitive impairment	http://www.assessmentscales.com/scales/doloplus

Regardless of the tool used, the tool must be used by all staff consistently to elicit valuable information, in order to implement the most appropriate pain management interventions.

Resources

1. Howell D, et al. Assessment and Management of Pain (Rev. 2007). RNAO Clinical Best Practice Guidelines. Retrieved from: http://rnao.org/Storage/29/2351_BPG_Pain_and_Supp.pdf.