

PAIN ASSESSMENT - MEASURING PAIN IN CONSCIOUS ADULT PATIENTS USING THE VISUAL ANALOGUE SCALE

Pain is one of the more trying human experiences throughout communities, history and individuality. Pain is a physical state of discomfort which becomes a handicap when it reaches an intensity level beyond what the patient can endure.

Deep pain dehumanizes and influences the patient's perceptions and thoughts of reality, overriding habits and mentalities.

Pain may change the way in which life itself is perceived.

From a spiritual standpoint, pain may be assigned meaning, as in it being a means to get closer to divinity. In Christian communities, pain as a source of suffering has redeeming potential. Bodily pain purifies the soul, therefore physical pain erases the sin. Such beliefs as found in the Christian faith are positive in that they instill hope in meeting God.

A student who undertook an internship in Senegal had such an experience with an ill woman in terminal condition who, upon seeing him wearing white, long haired and bearded, began to kiss his hands and clothes, thinking he was Christ. The joy upon her face was boundless, as was the student's embarrassment.

The faith of the Christian in pain who believes is meeting Christ creates willingness to bear any measure of pain. Identifying with Christ in such circumstances is complete. Modern medicine can only do its best to neutralize the pain.

Islam also sees pain as the atonement of sin and not as punishment. Pain is easier to bear if it is somehow meaningful and especially if it is perceived as beneficial for the soul. It is consolation as well as acceptance of the suffering caused by the pain, which thus may become a source of joy due to its soul purifying effect.