

O3_A2_A_Scientific Evidence

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

Q1	Is the Visual Analogue Scale reliable to measure current intensity of pain in adult patients?
Patients	Hospice and adult palliative care patients
Intervention	Using VAS-scale to measure intensity of pain or the effect of pain management
Comparator	Any other scale to measure intensity of pain or effects of pain management
Outcome	A measure for current intensity of pain
Methodology	Practice guidelines Systematic reviews

Studies:

Seven descriptive studies
One narrative review
One cross sectional study
Three clinical practice guideline

Indications:

- If patient indicates to have pain
- To monitor the effect of pain management

Discussion:

The Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) is a unidimensional measure of pain intensity, which has been widely used in diverse adult populations [1,9].

Reliability of the VAS for acute pain measurement appears to be high. Ninety percent of the pain ratings were reproducible within 9 mm. These data suggest that the VAS is sufficiently reliable to be used to assess acute pain [2]. The VAS provides a high degree of resolution and is probably the most sensitive single-item measure for clinical pain research [3].

For pain intensity, the scale is most commonly anchored by “no pain” (score of 0) and “pain as bad as it could be” or “worst imaginable pain” (score of 100 [100-mm scale]) [4 – 6]. To avoid clustering of scores around a preferred numeric value, numbers or verbal descriptors at intermediate points are not recommended [7,8].

Conclusions:

We endorse the current recommendations to use VAS as a tool to measure pain and to guide pain treatment. Moreover, VAS can be applied in various pathologies (oncology, emergency medicine, rheumatology etc.).

References:

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