

Pain: *Measuring the Fifth Vital Sign*

Pain is one of the most common reasons patients seek health care, yet it is often misunderstood and not well treated. Not all patients have their pain effectively measured or managed. In part, because pain is a multidimensional experience, having sensory, physical, psychosocial and emotional components. Pain perception is influenced by the patient's

survey of adults suffering from noncancer-related pain, 56% reported having pain for more than five years—pain that 41% of sufferers called “out of control.”

Regardless of cause, poorly managed pain delays healing and recovery time, alters the body's immune system and increases stress, anxiety, and depression. Uncontrolled pain and illness often results in financial hardship as these pain sufferers often have high

use of effective pain management interventions.

More than 40 states have enacted pain management guidelines or legislation. State licensing boards also have begun requiring physicians to demonstrate knowledge of pain assessment and evaluation. California has passed legislation making it necessary to evaluate and record pain as a “fifth vital sign,” after temperature, pulse, respiration, and blood pressure.

Pain measurement is the Fifth Vital Sign. James Campbell, MD, past president of the American Pain Society said, “Vital signs are taken seriously. If pain were assessed with the same zeal as other vital signs, it would have a much better chance of being treated properly. We need to train doctors and nurses to treat pain as a vital sign. Quality care means that pain is measured and treated.”

Nursing organizations are now actively promoting the inclusion of pain assessment in their evaluation patients. “If you have an idea of the level of pain, then you have a lot of clues as to how you can help that person,” said Marjorie Beyers, PhD, RN, FAAN, Executive Director →

sex, their previous experience with pain, pain relief, the meaning of pain in their culture, and how the pain affects their quality of life.

For many Americans, pain is chronic and uncontrolled. According to a survey by the Arthritis Foundation, 37% of all men and 46% of all women experience daily, on-going pain. Up to 50% of cancer patients in routine practice settings report inadequate relief of pain, and 25 million cancer patients worldwide die in pain each year, according to Michael Ashburn, MD, President of the American Pain Society (APS). In a recent APS

work absenteeism, may only be able to perform a limited scope of work or may not be able to work at all.

Because of the interest and concern for pain management, the JCAHO and a number of regulatory agencies have enacted guidelines for healthcare providers to inform their patients that they have the right to have their pain evaluated and effectively treated. Under these new standards, JCAHO expects health care providers to be knowledgeable about pain assessment and management. Healthcare facilities are expected to develop policies and procedures insuring the systematic assessment of pain and the

of the American Organization of Nurse Executives.

Nurses play a fundamental role in identifying and documenting the cause, duration and quality of pain and in providing physicians with the information that they need to better understand and treat their patient's pain.

The most common barrier to successful pain control is the failure of health care providers to assess for pain and the effectiveness of pain relief measures, according to the American Pain Society. Members of the healthcare team, using one of Healthcare Inspirations Pain Assessment

Pain Assessment Program

Assessment



A



B

Pain Assessment Tool

Our Pain Assessment Tools can help patients communicate their pain with a colorful and non-intimidating Pain Gauge.

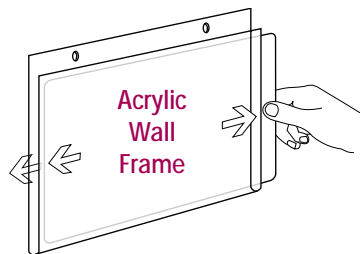
Size: 11 x 8-1/2"

Features:

- 2 Designs Available:
 - Design A features bright and bold colors (#HCINP-PAT-126)
 - Design B features soft and muted colors. (#HCINP-PAT-127)
- English/Spanish translation
- Full color printing with thick glossy lamination and rounded corners.

Customization Options:

- Add your logo/name
- Change translation to suit your patient population.
- ← Add our Acrylic Wall Frame to store the Pain Assessment Tool above each exam table. (#HCI-AWF-128)

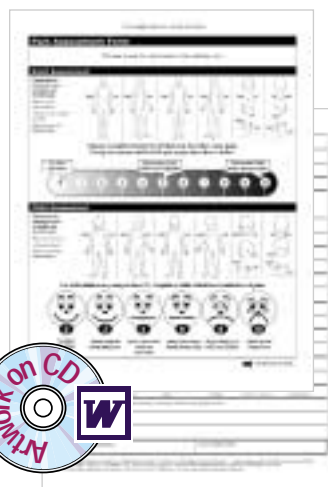


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JCAHO requires that intensity of pain be assessed in all patients in an ongoing manner and that the results are documented. Pain scales are the best tool to measure and communicate intensity of pain between patients and the care team. For adults, most scales rate pain on a 0-10 point scale—the higher the number, the more intense the pain. Pain scales using faces are used primarily with children. Healthcare Inspirations Pain Assessment Tool or Pain Assessment Form meet these criteria and are easy to use.

Tools can easily and effectively help patients to measure and understand their own pain. Our tools benchmark for clinical staff the effectiveness of medication and other therapeutic interventions in controlling pain. Patients can also use the tool to evaluate what activities of daily living enhance or diminish their pain. We know that if pain is ignored or not treated properly, it affects our patients quality of life and impairs their healing. Using pain as a fifth vital sign can significantly help overcome this barrier.

Documentation



Pain Assessment Form (#HCI-PAF-129)

Our Pain Assessment Form makes it easy to document a patient's level of pain throughout their continuum of care. The form artwork comes on CD in Microsoft Word® so you can customize it to fit your clinical setting.

Size: 8-1/2 x 11"

Languages: English/Spanish

Features:

- Area to customize with your logo/name/address, etc.
- Translation can be changed to suit your patient population.