# Appendix 9: The Clinical Opioid Withdrawal Scale

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name:** |  | | | | |
| **Reason for this assessment:** |  | | | | |
| **Date and time:** |  | | | | |
| **Resting pulse rate:** (record beats per minute)  *Measured after person is sitting or lying for one minute*  0 pulse rate 80 or below  1 pulse rate 81–100  2 pulse rate 101–120  4 pulse rate greater than 120 | |  |  |  |  |
| **Sweating:**  *Over past half-hour not accounted for by room temperature or activity*  0 no report of chills or flushing  1 subjective report of chills or flushing  2 flushed or observable moistness on face  3 beads of sweat on brow or face  4 sweat streaming off face | |  |  |  |  |
| **Restlessness:**  *Observation during assessmen*t  0 able to sit still  1 reports difficulty sitting still, but is able to do so  3 frequent shifting or extraneous movements of legs/arms  5 unable to sit still for more than a few seconds | |  |  |  |  |
| **Pupil size:**  0 pupils pinned or normal size for room light  1 pupils possibly larger than normal for room light  2 pupils moderately dilated  5 pupils so dilated that only the rim of the iris is visible | |  |  |  |  |
| **Bone or joint aches:**  *If the person was having pain previously, only the additional component attributed to opiates withdrawal is scored*  0 not present  1 mild diffuse discomfort  2 person reports severe diffuse aching of joints/ muscles  4 person is rubbing joints or muscles and is unable to sit still because of discomfort | |  |  |  |  |
| Runny nose or tearing:  *Not accounted for by cold symptoms or allergies*  0 not present  1 nasal stuffiness or unusually moist eyes  2 nose running or tearing  4 nose constantly running or tears streaming down cheeks | |  |  |  |  |
| **GI upset:**  *Over last half-hour*  0 no GI symptoms  1 stomach cramps  2 nausea or loose stool  3 vomiting or diarrhea  5 Multiple episodes of diarrhea or vomiting | |  |  |  |  |
| **Tremor:**  *Observation of outstretched hands*  0 No tremor  1 tremor can be felt, but not observed  2 slight tremor observable  4 gross tremor or muscle twitching | |  |  |  |  |
| **Yawning:**  *Observation during assessment*  0 no yawning  1 yawning once or twice during assessment  2 yawning three or more times during assessment  4 yawning several times/minute | |  |  |  |  |
| **Anxiety or irritability:**  0 none  1 patient reports increasing irritability or anxiousness  2 patient obviously irritable or anxious  4 patient so irritable or anxious that participation in the assessment is difficult | |  |  |  |  |
| **Gooseflesh skin:**  0 skin is smooth  3 piloerection of skin can be felt or hairs standing up on arms  5 prominent piloerection | |  |  |  |  |
| **Total scores**  The total score is the sum of all 11 items with observer’s initials | |  |  |  |  |

Score: 5–12 = mild; 13–24 = moderate; 25–36 = moderately severe; more than 36 = severe withdrawal.

Source: Wesson and Ling 2003.