

National Pain Council Pain Scale

Although the 10-point rating scale is widely used to assess pain, it is unreliable. What is a level 7 for one person might be a level 9 for someone else. What is the difference within the same patient between a 6 and a 7? Will this trip up the patient if there are inconsistencies in the patient's chart?

The National Pain Council (NPC) adopts the basic nomenclature that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) uses in categorizing all medicines for pain, including opiates, antidepressants, muscle relaxants and anticonvulsants. The medicines are rated for mild, moderate and severe pain not approved using a 10-point scale.

It is time the 10-point scale be abandoned in favor of a reproducible, reliable scale based on what is really critical: functionality.

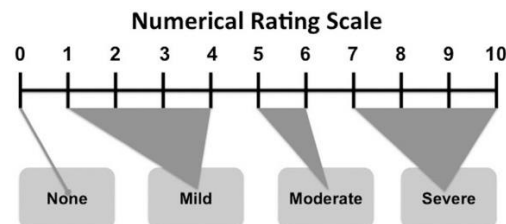
A functional scale is the best clinical tool to assess pain since many patients with painful diseases are reporting that they are not believed in the doctor's office. Doctors like concrete operationalized data, and this is the way to do it.

Following are the standard descriptions based on the FDA's classification of mild, moderate and severe pain:

- **Level 1 pain**, mild pain (10 point 1-3): no disruption in daily activity. Treatment with drugstore remedies such as hot and cold packs, as well as mindfulness
- **Level 2 pain**, moderate pain (10 point 4-6): some disruption in daily activity occurs, sleep is difficult at times, still able to work, hard to focus at times. Treatment with prescription drugs, including anticonvulsants, antidepressants, and opiates supplemented with drug store remedies, as well as hot and cold packs

- **Level 3 pain**, severe pain (10 point 7-10): continuous disruption in daily life, impossible to focus, the need to sleep more due to loss of normal sleep, inability to work, bed or couch-bound, no intimacy, unable to drive, cannot care for others, unable to participate in activities of faith, other outside interests, and recreation, such as hikes and picnics, rarely leaves the home. There is only one treatment approved by the FDA for Level 3 pain: opiates

Example of Pain Scale:



The NPC will use the **Level 1, 2, 3 functional pain** scale from now on and abandon the 10-point pain scale. The pain description is dependent on each patient's perception of pain, along with the expected variations in human physiology. A patient's report of pain should *never* be discarded unless all symptoms of all diseases are suspect. Our member pain specialists and board-certified physicians representing more than 100 years of clinical practice found only a tiny handful of liars trying to sell prescriptions (a one-month supply of oxycodone, one tablet every four hours is worth \$5,400 on the street).

Not believing patients is a serious professional and ethical error. In court, patients' reports of symptoms are *always* given first credence.

The NPC staff believes physicians who assert that their patients lie about their pain just "to score," when their lives are actually torn apart by pain, need to find other work.

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