

Instructions for applying the ALGOPLUS® scale

The ALGOPLUS® scale was specifically developed to evaluate and manage acute pain in the elderly in all situations in which reliable self-assessment is not feasible (e.g., those with difficulty communicating verbally).

ALGOPLUS is therefore particularly recommended for screening and evaluating :

- acute painful conditions (e.g., fractures, post-operative pain, ischemia, lumbago, herpes zoster, urinary retention, etc.),
- transitory pain attacks (e.g., facial neuralgia, cancer breakthrough pain, etc.),
- pain induced by treatment or medical diagnostic procedures.

The scale is composed of 5 items (observational areas/domains).

Observation of 1 of the behaviors listed in a given item is enough to check 'yes' for the item considered. Indeed, the simple observation of a behavior mandates that it be checked as present, regardless of any etiological interpretation or the duration of its existence.

In practice, to complete the grid, observe the patient – looking at the following – in order: the face, for facial expressions; the look, for eye expressions; listen for any sounds or complaints; his/her position, for body language; and general reactions, for atypical behaviors.

Each item checked "yes" is accorded 1 point and the sum of checked items gives a total score ranging from 1 to 5. A score ≥ 2 diagnoses pain with 87% sensitivity and 80% specificity, indicating that pain management should be initiated.

Subsequent reevaluations should then be made on a regular basis.

Pain management is satisfactory when the score remains strictly < 2 .

Common mistakes

Difficult to recognize:

- Grabbing should be checked "yes", regardless of the object of that action (the patient him/herself, caretaker or something else).
- Checking an item because of an etiological interpretation of the sign and not simply its presence, for example:
 - "Complaints" item checked "no" because the patient's complaint is attributed to dementia or because the patient has been complaining for a long time.
 - "Atypical behaviors" is scored "no" because grasping the bed's retaining bar is attributed to a fear of falling.

SCALE
ALGOPLUS

Acute pain-behavior scale
for older persons with inability
to communicate verbally

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