



# Hospice Palliative Care Tip of the Month – March 2017

*As care providers, we must ensure that our assessment skills are top notch, especially for those adults unable to speak their pain. For persons suffering with dementia, aphasia, or other conditions preventing an oral report, pain expression sometimes takes on less obvious forms, such as confusion, social withdrawal, aggression or subtle changes in behaviors ....which are not always typical manifestations of pain.*

## Common Pain Behaviours in Cognitively-Impaired Elderly Persons

### Facial Expressions

- Slight frown
- Sad face
- Frightened face
- Grimacing
- Wrinkled forehead
- Closed or tightened eyes
- Any distorted expression
- Rapid blinking

### Verbalizations Vocalization

- Sighing
- Moaning
- Groaning
- Grunting
- Chanting
- Calling out
- Noisy breathing
- Asking for help
- Verbally abusive

### Body Movements

- Rigid posture
- Tense body posture
- Guarding
- Fidgeting
- Increased pacing
- Increased rocking
- Restricted movement
- Gait or mobility changes

### Changes in Interpersonal Interactions

- Aggressiveness
- Combativeness
- Resisting care
- Decreased social interactions
- Socially inappropriate behaviours
- Disruptive behaviours
- Acting withdrawn

### Changes in Interpersonal Activity Patterns or Routines

- Refusing food
- Appetite changes
- Increase in rest periods
- Changes in sleep & rest patterns
- Sudden cessation of common routines
- Increased wandering

### Mental Status Changes

- Crying or tears
- Increased confusion
- Irritability or distress

## Consider utilizing a tool to assist with assessment!

### Sources:

Warden V, Hurley AC, Volicer L. Development and psychometric evaluation of the pain assessment in advanced dementia (PAINAD) scale. *J Am Med Dir Assoc.* 2003;4:9-15.

Herr, K., Coyne, P., McCaffrey, M., Manwarren, R. & Merkel, S. (2011). *Pain Assessment in the Patient Unable to Self-Report.* American Society for Pain Management Nursing

Items*	0	1	2	Score
Breathing independent of vocalization	Normal	Occasional labored breathing. Short period of hyperventilation.	Noisy labored breathing. Long period of hyperventilation. Cheyne-Stokes respirations.	
Negative vocalization	None	Occasional moan or groan. Low-level speech with a negative or disapproving quality.	Repeated troubled calling out. Loud moaning or groaning. Crying.	
Facial expression	Smiling or inexpressive	Sad. Frightened. Frown.	Facial grimacing.	
Body language	Relaxed	Tense. Distressed pacing. Fidgeting.	Rigid. Fists clenched. Knees pulled up. Pulling or pushing away. Striking out.	
Consolability	No need to console	Distracted or reassured by voice or touch.	Unable to console, distract or reassure.	
<b>Total**</b>				

\*Five-item observational tool (see the description of each item below).

\*\*Total scores range from 0 to 10 (based on a scale of 0 to 2 for five items), with a higher score indicating more severe pain (0="no pain" to 10="severe pain").

**Abbey Pain Scale**  
For measurement of pain in people with dementia who cannot verbalise.

How to use scale : While observing the resident, score questions 1 to 6.

Name of resident : \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and designation of person completing the scale : \_\_\_\_\_  
Date : \_\_\_\_\_ Time : \_\_\_\_\_  
Latest pain relief given was : \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ hrs.

Q1. Vocalization eg whimpering, groaning, crying Absent 0 Mild 1 Moderate 2 Severe 3	Q1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q2. Facial expression eg looking tense, frowning, grimacing, looking frightened Absent 0 Mild 1 Moderate 2 Severe 3	Q2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q3. Change in body language eg fidgeting, rocking, guarding part of body, withdrawn Absent 0 Mild 1 Moderate 2 Severe 3	Q3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q4. Behavioural Change eg increased confusion, refusing to eat, alteration in usual patterns Absent 0 Mild 1 Moderate 2 Severe 3	Q4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q5. Physiological change eg temperature, pulse or blood pressure outside normal limits, perspiring, flushing or pallor Absent 0 Mild 1 Moderate 2 Severe 3	Q5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q6. Physical changes eg skin tears, pressure areas, arthritis, contractures, previous injuries Absent 0 Mild 1 Moderate 2 Severe 3	Q6	<input type="checkbox"/>

Add scores for 1 - 6 and record here  Total Pain Score

Now tick the box that matches the Total Pain Score

0 - 2 No pain	3 - 7 Mild	8 - 13 Moderate	14 + Severe
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Finally, tick the box which matches the type of pain

Chronic	Acute	Acute on Chronic
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