



GeriCare Common Functional Assessment Tools in Palliative Care

Have you ever wonder how we can assess functional status among palliative patients?

Well, activities of daily living can be classified into basic and instrumental ADLs.

Basic ADLs include: toileting, bathing, dressing and grooming, feeding, ambulation and transferring.

Instrumental ADLs include: managing finances; transportation; communication with others, managing medications, shopping and meal preparation and house cleaning.

There are 3 common functional assessment tools used in Palliative Care.

Firstly, we have the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group Performance Status. Quite a mouthful, I know. But we can call it ECOG in short. it is categorized from grade 0 to grade 5

Grade 0 - Patient is fully active and can run, fly, dance. You get what I mean.

Grade 1 - Patient is restricted in physically strenuous activity but is still able to walk and carry out light duties. Similar to how you feel when you are having a fever, but you can still get some water for yourself but you probably can't go for a jog.

Grade 2 - Patient is still ambulatory, capable of all self-care but is unable to carry out any work activities. Patient can be up and about more than 50% of waking hours.

Grade 3 - Patient is limited in self-care, no longer able to walk as much, and is mostly confined to bed or chair.

Grade 4 - Patient is completely disabled and is totally confined to bed or chair

Grade 5 - Patient is dead

Secondly, we have the Palliative Performance Scale known as PPS. It measures the performance status through 5 observer rated areas which include: ambulation, activity, self-care, food or fluid intake and level of consciousness.

So, imagine a funnel filled with water, where water represents the functional categories. A funnel filled to the brim represents performance status of 100% and an empty funnel means 0%, which signifies death.

As the water level drops in decrements of 10%, so does the patient's functional status.

Lastly, from our friends in Australia, we have the Australian Karnofsky Performance Scale also known as AKPS. Ok I know it doesn't exactly sound Australian, but that's a story for another day.

This is a scale that scores between 0% to 100%, where 100% means that the patient has normal physical abilities with no evidence of disease and 0% means that the patient is dead.

AKPS is scaled in decrements of 10%, and is measured according to a patient's ability to perform common tasks relating to activity, work, and self-care.

To end off, tracking the functional status of palliative care patients using these tools is helpful in determining their prognosis. For more information on prognosis, check out our previous video on "Common Disease Trajectories"! See you!

References

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