

Appendix 9: The Australia-modified Karnofsky Performance Status (AKPS)

The Australia-modified Karnofsky Performance Status (AKPS) is a measure of the patient's overall performance status. It is a single score between 10 and 100 assigned by a clinician based on observations of a patient's ability to perform common tasks relating to activity, work and self-care. A score of 100 signifies normal physical abilities with no evidence of disease. Decreasing numbers indicate a reduced performance status.¹

How to assess AKPS

1. Use the AKPS definitions to determine the initial rating on admission or commencement of an episode of care.
2. Assess routinely. A minimum of daily in an inpatient setting, at each visit in a community setting or each consult.
3. Assess whenever there is a phase change.
4. Assess at episode end when a patient is discharged.
5. Assessment may be conducted face to face or over the phone.
6. Record the rating as assessed (scores in increments of 10). Scores such as 45, 55 or 50-60 are invalid.
7. The AKPS may be entered directly into an electronic patient record or on a clinical form to be entered into a data system at a later date (e.g. SnapShot). PCOC clinical forms are located on the website www.ahsri.uow.edu.au/pcoc/forms/index.html.

| AKPS ASSESSMENT CRITERIA | SCORE |
|---|-------|
| Normal; no complaints; no evidence of disease | 100 |
| Able to carry on normal activity; minor sign of symptoms of disease | 90 |
| Normal activity with effort; some signs or symptoms of disease | 80 |
| Cares for self; unable to carry on normal activity or to do active work | 70 |
| Able to care for most needs; but requires occasional assistance | 60 |
| Considerable assistance and frequent medical care required | 50 |
| In bed more than 50% of the time | 40 |
| Almost completely bedfast | 30 |
| Totally bedfast and requiring extensive nursing care by professionals and/or family | 20 |
| Comatose or barely rousable | 10 |
| Dead | 0 |

Examples of questions

"Have there been any changes today with the patient's ability to attend to activities of daily living?"

"Is the patient requiring more physical care today?"

"How much time is the patient actually spending in bed?"

Permission granted by Australian Health Services Research Institute; University of Wollongong: Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC)

Reference for AKPS:

1 Abernethy, A. P., Shelby-James, T., Fazekas, B. S., Woods, D. Currow, D. C. (2005). The Australia-modified Karnofsky Performance Status (AKPS) Scale: A Revised Scale for Contemporary Palliative Care Clinical Practice [Electronic Version]. *BioMed Central Palliative Care*, 4, 1-12