

Respiratory Distress Observation Scale (RDOS)

Purpose

This tool is to be used for assessing the intensity and distress of patients unable to report dyspnea during monitoring for Palliative Sedation Therapy^{1,2,3}.

Variable	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points	Sub-Total
Heart rate per min (beats / min = bpm)	less than 90 bpm	90 – 109 bpm	greater than or equal to 110 bpm	
Respiratory rate per minute (auscultated) (breaths / min)	less than 19 breaths	19 – 30 breaths	greater than 30 breaths	
Restlessness: non-purposeful movements	No	Yes - Occasional, slight movements	Yes - Frequent movements	
Paradoxical breathing pattern: abdomen moves in on inspiration	No		Yes	
Accessory muscle use: rise in clavicle during inspiration	No	Yes - Slight rise	Yes - Pronounced rise	
Grunting at end-expiration: guttural sounds	No		Yes	
Nasal flaring: involuntary movement of nares	No		Yes	
Look of fear: <input type="checkbox"/> Eyes wide open <input type="checkbox"/> Facial muscles tense <input type="checkbox"/> Brow furrowed <input type="checkbox"/> Mouth open <input type="checkbox"/> Teeth together	No		Yes	
Total				

Instructions for Use

- Count respiratory and heart rates for one full minute;
- Grunting may be audible with or without auscultation;
- An RDOS score of less than 3 indicates respiratory comfort²;
- An RDOS score greater than or equal to 3 signifies respiratory distress and need for palliation^{2,3};
- Higher RDOS scores signify a worsening condition^{2,3}.

- References:**
1. Campbell, M. L. (2008b). Psychometric testing of a respiratory distress observation scale. *J Palliative Care Medicine*, 11(1), 48.
 2. Campbell, ML and Templin TN. (2015). Intensity cut-points for the Respiratory Distress Observation Scale. *Palliat Med*. 29(5): 436–442
 3. Zhang et al. (2019). Validity, Reliability, and Diagnostic Accuracy of the Respiratory Distress Observation Scale for Assessment of Dyspnea in Adult Palliative Care Patients. *J Pain Symptom Manage*;57(2):304-310.