

## Appendix B Clinical Opioid Withdrawal Score (COWS)

<b>PATIENT NAME:</b>	<b>DATE OF ASSESSMENT:</b>
<b>PATIENT DATE OF BIRTH:</b>	<b>MEDICAL RECORD NUMBER:</b>

### Clinical Opioid Withdrawal Score (COWS)

For each item, write in the number that best describes the patient's signs or symptom. Rate only the apparent relationship to opiate withdrawal. For example: If heart rate is increased because the patient was jogging just prior to assessment, the increased pulse rate would not add to the score.

Enter scores at time zero, 30 minutes after first dose, 2 hours after first dose, etc.	Time:	Time:	Time:	Time:
<b>Resting Pulse Rate:</b> Record beats per minute after patient is sitting or lying down for one minute • 0 - pulse rate 80 or below • 1 - pulse rate 81–100 • 2 - pulse rate 101–120 • 4 - pulse rate greater than 120				
<b>Sweating:</b> Over past ½ hour not accounted for by room temperature or activity • 0 - no chills or flushing • 1 - subjective chills or flushing • 2 - flushed or observable moistness on face • 3 - beads of sweat on brow or face • 4 - sweat streaming off face				
<b>Restlessness:</b> Observation during assessment • 0 - able to sit still • 1 - reports difficulty sitting still, but is able to do so • 3 - frequent shifting or extraneous movement of legs/arms • 5 - unable to sit still for more than a few seconds				
<b>Pupil size</b> • 0 - pupils pinned or normal size for light • 1 - pupils possibly larger than normal for light • 2 - pupils moderately dilated • 5 - pupils dilated that only rim of the iris is visible				
<b>Bone or joint aches:</b> If patient was having pain previously, only the additional component attributed to opiate withdrawal is scored • 0 - not present • 1 - mild/diffuse discomfort • 2 - patient reports severe diffuse aching of joints/muscles • 4 - patient is rubbing joints or muscles and is unable to sit still because of discomfort				
<b>Runny nose or tearing:</b> Not accounted for by cold symptoms or allergy • 0 - none present • 1 - nasal stuffiness or unusually moist eyes • 2 - nose running or tearing • 4 - nose constantly running or tears streaming down cheeks				
<b>GI upset:</b> Over last ½ hour • 0 - no GI symptoms • 1 - stomach cramps • 2 - nausea or loose stool • 3 - vomiting or diarrhea • 5 - multiple episodes of diarrhea or vomiting				
<b>Tremor:</b> Observation of outstretched hands • 0 - no tremor • 1 - tremor can be felt, but not observed • 2 - slight tremor observable • 4 - gross tremor or muscle twitching				
<b>Yawning:</b> Observation during assessment • 0 - no yawning • 1 - yawning once or twice during assessment • 2 - yawning three or more times during assessment • 4 - yawning several times/minute				
<b>Anxiety or irritability</b> • 0 - none • 1 - patient reports increasing irritability or anxiousness • 2 - patient obviously irritable or anxious • 4 - patient so irritable or anxious that participation in the assessment is difficult				
<b>Gooseflesh skin</b> • 0 - skin is smooth • 3 - piloerection of skin can be felt or hairs standing up on arms • 5 - prominent piloerection				
<b>5–12 = mild;</b> <b>13–24 = moderate;</b> <b>25–36 = moderately severe;</b> <b>&gt; 36 = severe withdrawal</b>				
<b>TOTAL</b>				
<b>OBSERVER INITIALS</b>				

Journal of Psychoactive Drugs Volume 35 (2), April - June 2003 Source: Wesson, D. R., & Ling, W. (2003). The Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale (COWS). J Psychoactive Drugs, 35(2), 253-9.