



Sensitivity and Specificity of a Four-Item Clinical Score for Diagnosing Acute Bacterial Sinusitis

Score	Sensitivity (%)	Specificity (%)
1	99	49
2	96	77
3	81	89
4	24	97

The four items are purulent rhinorrhea with unilateral predominance, local pain with unilateral predominance, bilateral purulent rhinorrhea, and presence of pus in the nasal cavity.

The clinical score is derived from the number of criteria used to define the presence of acute bacterial sinusitis.

The presence of any one of the criteria (score of 1) for diagnosis has a very high sensitivity (99%) of identifying acute bacterial sinusitis but also a very high false-positive rate (51%) (1 – specificity).

The presence of all four criteria (score of 4) decreases the sensitivity to 24% but decreases the false-positive rate to 3%.

The gold standard for these figures is sinus puncture and aspiration. Adapted from Berg O, Carenfelt C. Analysis of symptoms and clinical signs in the maxillary sinus empyema. *Acta Otolaryngol.* 1988;105:343-9. (PMID: 3389120).

Table from *Physicians Information and Education Resource (PIER)*, Acute Sinusitis module.