

5 A's – Opioid therapy monitoring tool

Once initiating opioid therapy, it should be monitored regularly by assessing what has been called the “5As” of Analgesia therapy. This monitoring tool, will assist you in adapting the treatment and management plan of your patient by evaluating whether the patient has a reduction in pain (**Analgesia**), has demonstrated an improvement in level of function (**Activity**), is experiencing significant **Adverse effects**, whether there is evidence of **Aberrant** substance-related behaviours, and mood of the individual (**Affect**).¹

1. Activity

What progress has been made in the patient's functional goals?

- Sitting tolerance
- Standing tolerance
- Walking ability
- Ability to perform activities of daily living

2. Analgesia

How does the patient rate the following over the last 24 hours?

Eg) on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 = no pain, 10 = worst pain imaginable

- Average pain ?
- Worst pain ?
- How much relief have pain medications provided? e.g. 10%, 20%, 30% or more?

3. Adverse effects

Has the patient experienced any adverse effects from medication?

Eg) constipation, nausea, dizziness, drowsiness

4. Aberrant behaviours

Has the patient been taking medication/s as prescribed?

Has the patient exhibited any signs of problematic behaviours or medication abuse/misuse?

- Signs of drug and alcohol use
- Unsanctioned dose escalations
- Has the patient reported lost prescriptions or requested early repeats?

5. Affect

Have there been any changes to the way the patient has been feeling?

- Is pain impacting on the patient's mood?
- Is the patient depressed or anxious?

Reference: 1. Executive Committee of the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States, Inc. Model policy on the use of opioid analgesics in the treatment of chronic pain. July 2013. (Sourced 25/2/14) www.fsmb.org/pdf/pain_policy_july2013