

Appendix 9: Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment Scale - Benzodiazepines

Guide to the Use of the Clinical Withdrawal Assessment Scale for Benzodiazepines

Person Report:

For each of the following items, circle the number that best describes how you feel.

Do you feel irritable?	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4 Very much so
Do you feel fatigued?	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4 Unable to function
Do you feel tense?	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4 Very much so
Do you have difficulties concentrating?	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4 Unable to concentrate
Do you have any loss of appetite?	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4 No appetite, unable to eat
Have you any numbness or burning on your face, hands or feet?	0 No numbness	1	2	3	4 Intense burning/numbness
Do you feel your heart racing? (palpitations)	0 No disturbance	1	2	3	4 Constant racing
Does your head feel full or achy?	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4 Severe headache

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Do you feel muscle aches or stiffness?	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4 Severe stiffness or pain
Do you feel anxious, nervous or jittery?	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4 Very much so
Do you feel upset?	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4 Very much so
How restful was your sleep last night?	0 Very restful	1	2	3	4 Not at all
Do you feel weak?	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4 Very much so
Do you think you didn't have enough sleep last night?	0 Very much so	1	2	3	4 Not at all
Do you have any visual disturbances? (sensitivity to light, blurred vision)	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4 Very sensitive to light, blurred vision
Are you fearful?	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4 Very much so
Have you been worrying about possible misfortunes lately?	0 Not at all	1	2	3	4 Very much so

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Clinician Observations

Observe behaviour for sweating, restlessness and agitation		Observe tremor		Observe feel palms	
0	None, normal activity	0	No tremor	0	No sweating visible
1		1	Not visible, can be felt in fingers	1	Barely perceptible sweating, palms moist
2	Restless	2	Visible but mild	2	Palms and forehead moist, reports armpit sweating
3		3	Moderate with arms extended	3	Beads of sweat on forehead
4	Paces back and forth, unable to sit still	4	Severe, with arms not extended	4	Severe drenching sweats

Total Score Items 1 – 20

1–20 = mild withdrawal

41–60 = severe withdrawal

21–40 = moderate withdrawal

61–80 = very severe withdrawal

Source: Adapted from Busto, U.E., Sykora, K. & Sellers, E.M. (1989). A clinical scale to assess benzodiazepine withdrawal. *Journal of Clinical Psychopharmacology*, 9 (6), 412–416.