

Figure 3-7: Edmonton Symptom Assessment Scale (ESAS)

This tool was designed to assist in the assessment of nine symptoms that are common in cancer patients: pain, tiredness, nausea, depression, anxiety, drowsiness, loss of appetite, impaired well-being and shortness of breath (there is also a line labeled “other problems”). The severity at the time of assessment of each symptom is rated by the patient from 0 to 10 on a numerical scale, 0 meaning that the symptom is absent and 10 that it is of the worst possible severity. The patient is asked to circle the most appropriate number on the numerical scale to indicate where the symptom lies between the two extremes. The circled number can then be transcribed onto a Symptom Assessment Graph.

Ideally, patients fill out their own ESAS. Although caregiver-provided data have significant limitations, if a patient cannot independently complete the ESAS, then consideration can be given to having a caregiver assist the patient in completing this instrument. That caregiver assistance was needed should always be documented in the space provided at the bottom of the ESAS Numerical Scale and the Graph, and the validity of this report will need to be considered carefully.

This instrument can be used for monitoring symptoms in the hospital or in a home care setting (through telephone or personal contact). It has been used in some settings on a weekly basis. In other settings—for example, in in-patient hospices or tertiary palliative care units—it is often used on more frequent, sometimes daily, basis.

Edmonton Symptom Assessment: Numerical Scale												
Please circle the number that best describes:												
No Pain	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Worst Possible Pain
Not Tired	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Worst Possible Tiredness
Not Nauseated	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Worst Possible Nausea
Not Depressed	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Worst Possible Depression
Not Anxious	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Worst Possible Anxiety
Not Drowsy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Worst Possible Drowsiness
Best Appetite	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Worst Possible Appetite
Best Feeling of Well Being	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Worst Feeling of Well Being
No Shortness of Breath	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Worst Possible Shortness of Breath
Other Problems	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Worst Possible

Source: Bruera E, Kuehn N, Miller MJ, Macmillan K. The Edmonton Symptom Assessment Scale: a simple method for the assessment of palliative care patients. *J Palliat Care* 7:6-9, 1991. Reproduced with permission. Copyright 1991.

Figure 3-7: Edmonton Symptom Assessment Scale (ESAS) (continued)

Edmonton Symptom Assessment: Visual Analogue Scale

Name: _____

Room#: _____

Please cross the line at the point that best describes: (For coding)

No Pain	_____	Worst Possible Pain
Not Tired	_____	Worst Possible Tiredness
Not Nauseated	_____	Worst Possible Nausea
Not Depressed	_____	Worst Possible Depression
Not Anxious	_____	Worst Possible Anxiety
Not Drowsy	_____	Worst Possible Drowsiness
Best Appetite	_____	Worst Possible Appetite
Best Feeling of Well Being	_____	Worst Feeling of Well Being
No Shortness of Breath	_____	Worst Shortness of Breath
Other Problems	_____	Worst Possible

Assessed by: _____

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