

Table 3-6: Considerations for Symptom Measurement in Clinical Settings

Patient-related factors	Can the patient comprehend the method of measurement, and what is the impact of the patient's cognitive state on his or her report?
	How willing and able is the patient to provide reports and/or complete an instrument?
	Are there cultural and language barriers that have impact on the symptom report?
	Is it possible that the patient may be reluctant to report a specific symptom?
	Is it important, in this particular patient, to assess one symptom or multiple symptoms?
	Do the patient's descriptions for the symptom accurately match those used in the method or instrument selected for reporting? (This is related to instrument validity.)
Symptom-specific factors	Which symptoms and dimensions of symptoms need to be assessed, from the patient's perspective? Usually "distress" or "bothersomeness" is important to consider.
	What symptoms or signs are crucial factors to monitor? E.g., in certain cases fever may be a "vital sign" and warrant some priority in assessment.
	Is the symptom important to detect <i>and</i> likely to go unnoticed? E.g., pain and confusion.

Table 3-6: Considerations for Symptom Measurement in Clinical Settings (continued)

<p>Symptom-specific factors continued</p>	<p>When should symptoms be assessed? E.g., if a symptom only occurs when the patient moves, then assessment at rest would not provide useful information.</p>
<p>Clinician resources</p>	<p>What symptoms are amenable to intervention? E.g., hair loss may not be as amenable to intervention as pain; therefore pain may warrant a higher priority for routine measurement.</p>
	<p>What resources are available for monitoring symptoms and collecting data from symptom reports? If patients are asked to provide information, it is important that clinicians have the ability to review and respond to the information provided; unnecessary burden should not be imposed on patients.</p>
	<p>What are the factors related to the method selected for measurement?</p>
	<p>Has the method selected for measurement been demonstrated to be valid and reliable for the assessment of the symptom? Is it valid and reliable both in general and the patient's particular population?</p>
	<p>Does the method selected for measurement assess the clinically relevant symptoms, including dimensions and impact of the symptom? I.e., the dimensions or impact that the patient prioritizes.</p>
	<p>Does the method selected for measurement assess the symptoms in a timely manner? E.g., if a symptom is present at night or on movement, measurement must reflect this.</p>
	<p>How complex is the method selected for measurement, and what burden does this method of reporting impose on the patient?</p>