

Stirling[®] Pressure Ulcer/Sore Severity Scale (SPSSS)

Assessment Overview

Assessment Area

ICF Domain:

Body Function

Subcategory:

Functions of the Skin

You Will Need

Scoring:

The scale has 5 stages (0-4), where zero represents no clinical appearance and four indicates full thickness skin loss with extensive destruction extending to bone, tendon or joint capsule.

The two-digit version includes more detailed ulcer descriptors.

Training:

To ensure basic understanding of skin and soft tissue anatomy and relevant physiological concepts, practitioners should undergo training prior to using the scale.

Summary

Stirling[®] Pressure Ulcer Severity Scale is used to describe the severity of pressure ulcers. It was derived from previously published UK scales developed by a consensus panel of national tissue viability experts.

This clinician-administered observational scale has 5 stages ranging from stage 0 to stage 4, where:

0 = no clinical evidence of a pressure sore

1 = discoloration of the intact skin

2 = partial-thickness skin loss or damage involving epidermis and/or dermis

3 = full-thickness skin loss involving damage or necrosis of subcutaneous tissue but not extending to underlying bone, tendon or joint capsule

4 = full-thickness skin loss with extensive destruction and tissue necrosis extending to bone, tendon or capsule.

The scale has several variations, with the most common being the 1 and 2-digit scales, where the nature and severity of the ulcer are graded.

Availability

Can be found here: [Microsoft Word - worksheet stirlings pressure ulcer severity scale.docx \(scireproject.com\)](#)

Assessment Interpretability

Minimal Clinically Important Difference

Not established in SCI

Statistical Error

Not established in SCI

Typical Values

Distribution of pressure ulcers using the Stirling wound classification:

| | Frequency (%) |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Stage 1 | 3 (5.4) |
| Stage 2 | 12 (21.4) |
| Stage 3 | 37 (66.1) |
| Stage 4 | 4 (7.1) |
| Total | 56 (100) |

(Wellard et al. 2000; n=60, mixed injury types, admission to hospital with 1+ pressure ulcers, mean (SD) length of stay in hospital = 91 (98) days)

Measurement Properties

Validity [?] **Low to Moderate**

When the scales were treated as continuous variables:

Low to Moderate correlation with:

Norton scale: $\rho = -0.28$

Waterlow scale: $\rho = 0.38$

Braden scale: $\rho = 0.03$

*When the scales were treated as categorical variables
(e.g. at risk, high risk, very high risk):*

Low to Moderate correlation with:

Norton scale: $\rho = 0.14$

Waterlow scale: $\rho = 0.32$

Braden scale: $\rho = -0.08$

(Wellard et al. 2000; n=60, mixed injury types, admission to hospital with 1+ pressure ulcers, mean (SD) length of stay in hospital = 91 (98) days)

Number of studies reporting validity data: 1

Reliability

Not established in SCI

Responsiveness

Floor/Ceiling Effect:

Not established in SCI

Effect Size:

Not established in SCI

Number of studies reporting

responsiveness data: 0