

The Critical-Care Pain Observation Tool (CPOT)

(Adapted from Gélinas et al., AJCC 2006; 15(4):420-427)

Indicator	Score	Description
Facial expressions	Relaxed, neutral 0	No muscle tension observed
	Tense 1	Presence of frowning, brow lowering, orbit tightening and levator contraction or any other change (e.g. opening eyes or tearing during nociceptive procedures)
	Grimacing 2	All previous facial movements plus eyelid tightly closed (the patient may present with mouth open or biting the endotracheal tube)
Body movements	Absence of movements or normal position 0	Does not move at all (doesn't necessarily mean absence of pain) or normal position (movements not aimed toward the pain site or not made for the purpose of protection)
	Protection 1	Slow, cautious movements, touching or rubbing the pain site, seeking attention through movements
	Restlessness/Agitation 2	Pulling tube, attempting to sit up, moving limbs/thrashing, not following commands, striking at staff, trying to climb out of bed
Compliance with the ventilator (intubated patients)	Tolerating ventilator or movement 0	Alarms not activated, easy ventilation
	Coughing but tolerating 1	Coughing, alarms may be activated but stop spontaneously
	Fighting ventilator 2	Asynchrony: blocking ventilation, alarms frequently activated
OR		
Vocalization (extubated patients)	Talking in normal tone or no sound 0	Talking in normal tone or no sound
	Sighing, moaning 1	Sighing, moaning
	Crying out, sobbing 2	Crying out, sobbing
Muscle tension Evaluation by passive flexion and extension of upper limbs when patient is at rest or evaluation when patient is being turned	Relaxed 0	No resistance to passive movements
	Tense, rigid 1	Resistance to passive movements
	Very tense or rigid 2	Strong resistance to passive movements or incapacity to complete them
TOTAL	___ / 8	

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For more information about the CPOT use, contact the author at celine.gelinas@mcgill.ca

*Note: when a patient's CPOT is > 3, the team will evaluate pain sources and modify/enhance pain management. CPOT sensitivity=86% and specificity=78% (Gélinas C, J Pain Symp Man 2009).