

Rapid Disability Rating Scale

Overview: The Rapid Disability Rating Scale can be used to assess the level of patient disability especially in the elderly. It is useful for monitoring over time to see if the patient is improving stable or worsening.

- The scale is completed by a caregiver familiar with the patient.
- Based on the response points ranging from 1 to 3 are assigned indicating no or slight moderate and severe impairment

Directions: On the basis of your knowledge about the patient at the present time will you please rate the following items.

Activity	Ability	Points
eating	no assistance	1
	moderate assistance	2
	considerable assistance	3
diet	regular diet	1
	modified regular diet	2
	special diet	3
medications	rarely	1
	occasionally	2
	every day	3
speech	not impaired	1
	moderately impaired	2
	unable to be understood	3
hearing	normal	1
	moderately impaired	2
	deaf	3
sight	normal (with glasses if worn)	1
	moderately impaired	2
	blind	3
walking	no assistance	1
	needs someone's help or uses a crutch or walker	2

	unable to walk	3
bathing	no assistance	1
	moderate assistance	2
	considerable assistance	3
dressing	no assistance	1
	moderate assistance	2
	considerable assistance	3
incontinence	never	1
	occasionally	2
	all of the time	3
shaving	no assistance	1
	moderate assistance	2
	considerable assistance	3
safety supervision	never	1
	sometimes	2
	all of the time	3
confined to bed	not at all	1
	part of the day	2
	all the time	3
mentally confused	never	1
	occasionally	2
	all of the time	3
uncooperative	never	1
	occasionally	2
	all of the time	3
depression	never	1
	occasionally	2
	all of the time	3

rapid disability rating scale score = SUM(points for all 16 parameters)

Interpretation:

- minimum score 16 indicating no significant disability
- maximum score 48 indicating total disability

Limitations:

- The scale was developed as a research tool and its use as a clinical instrument was not specifically explored.
- While following the total score can provide a rapid assessment of the patient over time it is also useful to compare the time course for specific items of the scale. If one condition improves while another deteriorates then the total score may not change which may be misleading if a given therapy is being evaluated.

References:

Linn MW. A rapid disability rating scale. J Am Geriatric Soc. 1976; 15; 211-214.