

Resource 3

Pain relief for hand contractures

People with hand contractures may experience pain at rest and if force is used to open a hand, e.g. for hand hygiene, this may be painful.

People who have difficulty communicating may struggle to express pain and it may be difficult to assess their pain. The Abbey Pain Scale may be useful for determining a resident's level of pain and response to pain relief. For those who can express pain verbally, a number pain scoring tool may be useful, e.g. x out of 10.

If the person you care for is experiencing pain from hand contracture(s), consider the following.

- Good communication between nurses/senior carers, carers, and GPs, and full care plan records, are important to ensure that effective care and pain relief is provided.
- Discuss the need for pain relief with their GP who will decide the level to be used (usually starting with paracetamol as required, then regularly if needed).
- Pain relief may only be needed before hand hygiene is attempted or all the time, depending on severity.
- If paracetamol is ineffective, the next step may be codeine, morphine, or another suitable alternative on a 'when required' or regular basis. The dose or type of medication may need to be adjusted if it does not work or if there are side effects.
- Make sure their pain is reviewed regularly to ensure pain relief is effective and act if it isn't. Using a pain scale and recording pain levels at different times of the day can be useful (see example of an Abbey Pain Scale on the following page).
- A body map may be helpful if there are multiple areas of pain to assess and treat.
- If pain relief is needed before hand hygiene, give it at least 30 minutes before and check it is working before starting (an instruction can be added to the prescription and their medication administration record (MAR) to ensure this happens).
- Record the effect of any pain relief on the relevant MAR chart section (see example on p3).
- Check and report any side effects of the medication to the GP, e.g. if morphine is used, drowsiness, confusion, or constipation may occur.

Example Abbey Pain Scale

For measurement of pain in people with dementia who cannot verbalise.

While observing the patient, score them against the following six questions from 1-3 using the following range:

Absent: 0 Mild: 1 Moderate: 2 Severe: 3

Name of resident:				
Name and designation of person completing the scale:				
Date:		Time:		
Last pain relief given was _____ at _____ hrs				
	Observation			APS score
Q1	Vocalisation e.g., whispering, groaning, crying			
Q2	Facial expression e.g., looking tense, frowning, grimacing, or frightened			
Q3	Change in body language e.g., fidgeting, rocking, guarding part of the body, withdrawn			
Q4	Behavioural change e.g., increased confusion, refusing to eat, alteration in usual patterns			
Q5	Physiological change e.g., temperature, pulse or blood pressure outside normal limits, perspiring, flushing, or pallor			
Q6	Physical changes e.g., skin tears, pressure areas, arthritis, contractures, previous injuries			
Add scores for 1-6 and record here the total pain score:				
Tick the box that matches the total pain score :	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 – 2 No pain	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 – 7 Mild	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 – 13 Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> 14+ Severe
	Tick the box that matches the type of pain :		<input type="checkbox"/> Chronic	<input type="checkbox"/> Acute

Example of medication recording chart

Medication Administration Record																					
Name: Mr Man			D.O.B: 2/4/1922			Allergies: Ramipril															
Care Home: Sunshine View						Room: 2															
GP: Dr Doctor			Start date: 1/4/00			Start Day: Tuesday															
Medication	Dose	Week 1					Week 2					Week 3					Week 4				
		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Ibuprofen 5% gel TEN up to FOUR times a day to ease(a) pain	0800	✓																			
Quant rec'd 1	Sig L&S	Date 9/19/00	Carried fwd: 0					Returned/destroyed: 0					Sig L&S	Date: 9/19/00							
Paracetamol 500mg- 1g FOUR TIMES A DAY when required for pain	0930	✓																			
Quant rec'd 1	Sig L&S	Date 9/19/00	Carried fwd: 0					Returned/destroyed: 0					Sig L&S	Date: 9/19/00							
Morphine sulphate solution 10mg in 5ml 2.5ml (5mg) to be given 30 minutes before usual care	0900	✓																			
Quant rec'd 100ml	Sig L&S	Date 9/19/00	Carried fwd: 0ml					Returned/destroyed: 0					Sig L&S	Date: 9/19/00							
Date	Time	Medicine	Dose	Route	Initials	Reason Given	Results	Time checked	Initials												
1/4/00	0800	Ibuprofen 5% gel		R knee topical	dt	Pain in R knee	Pain less but not completely gone	0900	L&S												
1/4/00	0930	Paracetamol	1g	PO	dt	Pain in R knee	Pain resolved	1040	L&S												
1/4/00	0900	Morphine sulphate solution	2.5ml	PO	dt	Prevent pain in hand during care	Care given without signs of pain	0930	dt												
Signature		Initials	Signature		Initials	Signature		Initials	Signature		Initials										
Tina Tomcic		dt																			
Lobby Green		L&S																			



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