Subjective Opiate Withdrawal Scale (SOWS)

**For each question circle (O) one answer**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Not at all | A little | Moderately | Quite a bit | Extremely |
| Q1. I feel anxious | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q2. I feel like yawning | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q3. I am perspiring | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q4. My eyes are teary | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q5. My nose is running | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q6. I have goose flesh | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q7. I am shaking | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q8. I have hot flushes | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q9. I have cold flushes | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q10. My bones & muscles ache | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q11. I feel restless | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q12. I feel nauseous | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q13. I feel like vomiting | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q14. My muscles twitch | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q15. I have cramps in my stomach | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| Q16. I feel like shooting up | ⬜ 0 | ⬜ 1 | ⬜ 2 | ⬜ 3 | ⬜ 4 |
| ***Total Score:*** |  |

**Scoring and interpretation**: Clients score each SOWS item on a five-point scale (i.e., 0,1,2,3 & 4). A total score is calculated by summing the responses to all 16 items. The minimum total score possible is 0, and the maximum total score possible is 64 (i.e. total score range: 0-64).

**SOWS score interpretation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Interpretation** |
| 1-10 | Mild withdrawal |
| 11-20 | Moderate withdrawal |
| 21 or more | Severe withdrawal |

**Tool citation:** Handelsman, L., Cochrane, K., Aronson, M., et al. *Two new rating scales for opiate withdrawal.* American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, 1987. **13**(3): 293-308.

## Further information: Fischer, J.A., Roche, A.M., and Duraisingam, V. *Subjective Opioid Withdrawal Scale (SOWS): description, strengths and knowledge gaps*. 2021, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA), Flinders University: Adelaide, South Australia.