

Pasero Opioid-Induced Sedation Scale (POSS)¹

S = Sleep, easy to arouse

Acceptable; no action necessary; may increase opioid dose if needed.

1 = Awake and alert

Acceptable; no action necessary; may increase opioid dose if needed.

2 = Slightly drowsy, easily aroused

Acceptable; no action necessary; may increase opioid dose if needed.

3 = Frequently drowsy, arousable, drifts off to sleep during conversation

Unacceptable; monitor respiratory status and sedation level closely until sedation level is stable at less than 3 and respiratory status is satisfactory; decrease opioid dose 25% to 50% or notify prescriber or anesthesiologist for orders; consider administering a non-sedating, opioid-sparing nonopioid, such as acetaminophen or an NSAID, if not contraindicated.

4 = Somnolent, minimal or no response to verbal or physical stimulation

Unacceptable; stop opioid; consider administering naloxone; notify prescriber or anesthesiologist; monitor respiratory status and sedation level closely until sedation level is stable at less than 3 and respiratory status is satisfactory.

¹ Pain Assessment and Pharmacologic Management, by C. Pasero and M. McCaffery, 2011, St. Louis, MO: Mosby/Elsevier. Copyright (1994) by Chris Pasero.