

THE BEHAVIOURAL VITAL SIGNS (BVS) TOOL

DID YOU KNOW...

1. Did you know that it is essential to know the target cluster(s)/symptom(s) one is treating to guide and monitor non-pharmacological approaches and pharmacological treatment?
2. Did you know that once the target cluster(s)/symptom(s) are identified, their magnitude can be quantified (the BVS Tool)?
3. Did you know that the BVS Tool helps in assessing the efficacy of the interventions?

KEY TEACHING POINTS

- Characterize the behaviour precisely with special attention to the circumstances under which it occurs, when it started, and whether onset was gradual or sudden.
- The symptom of “agitation” can be part of one or more behavioural clusters.
- Prescribing medication for behavioural disturbances in dementia requires systematic measurements of target symptoms, their frequency, severity, and impact. It also helps monitor the effectiveness of interventions.
- The ongoing measurement of target symptoms requires:
 - Direct assessment by interview and examination
 - Proxy reports from caregivers.

Assessment and Monitoring Review

- The authors examined several tools for assessing and monitoring BPSD and found that there is no ideal practical tool for clinical use.
- Some of these tools are in Appendix A. Each is useful in many ways, but has several limitations, e.g., time, ease of availability, lack of established cut-off scores, regional differences in usage.
- We suggest a user-friendly, one-page, observational chart for monitoring of BPSD called “The Behavioural Vital Signs (BVS) Tool.”

Instructions on How to Use the Behavioural Vital Signs Tool

Rationale:

The Behavioural Vital Signs Tool is different from other scales in that it:

1. rates global overall impression of the patient's behaviours.
2. minimizes detailed, lengthy charting.
3. Allows for tracking of behaviours over time in an easy, user-friendly way.

The Behavioural Vital Signs Tool may be implemented by the physician, nurse, or caregiver. A healthcare professional with a working knowledge of the tool will train others on how to use it.

The Behavioural Vital Signs Tool is a **two-step charting method** for behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia.



Step 1. Identify behaviours

SIDE A: Highlight all the behaviours in the clusters as well as the symptoms of agitation exhibited by the patient during the chosen time period.

- The time period is flexible and may be ordered “BVS per shift” or “BVS per day.”



Step 2. Monitor behaviours

SIDE B: Using the scale given (from 1 to 5), **rate:**

- **F** = Overall Behaviour Frequency
- **S** = Severity (How difficult is it to distract or redirect the patient?)
- **I** = Impact (Potential harm to self/others)

Then, **mark the overall rating of behaviour disturbance—clusters and symptoms** exhibited by the patient during the chosen time period on the chart.



Start a new sheet each time a new set of significant new behaviours emerges.

A sample completed Behavioural Vital Signs Tool is on the next page, followed by a template to be copied for your use.

SIDE A

BEHAVIOURAL VITAL SIGNS (BVS)

Patient Name: _____

Age: _____

INSTRUCTIONS

SIDE A – highlight all the behaviours in the clusters and symptoms of agitation

SIDE B – rate behaviour frequency, severity, and impact, THEN

– mark the overall rating of behaviour disturbance – clusters and symptoms

Start a new sheet each time a new set of significant new behaviours emerges.

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CLUSTERS

<p>Delusions (of)</p> <p>People stealing things Not recognizing one's own house or surroundings Not recognizing spouse (or other caretaker) "imposter" False belief of abandonment (e.g., to an institution) False belief of infidelity Suspiciousness or paranoia other than above _____</p> <p>Other _____</p>	<p>Hallucinations</p> <p>Visual Auditory Olfactory (false perception of smell) Haptic (false perception of touch or surface sensation)</p> <p>Other _____</p>	<p>Depression/Anxiety</p> <p>Sad/depressed mood – negative attitude, hopeless/helpless, tearful (CORE SYMPTOM) Diminished interest or pleasure in activity (CORE SYMPTOM) Significant weight loss (loss of appetite) Insomnia or hypersomnia (sleeps too little or too much) Psychomotor agitation or retardation (pacing, restless, poor concentration, constantly preoccupied with physical complaints) Sits/sleeps all day/withdrawn Fatigue or poor energy Feeling worthless, hopeless Guilt Suicidal – recurrent thoughts of death or suicidal ideation/attempts</p> <p>Other _____</p>	<p>Manic States</p> <p>Elation/euphoria Disinhibition Pressured speech Flight of ideas/distractable Inflated self-esteem Grandiose ideas Decreased need for sleep Irritability/lability Socially/sexually inappropriate (e.g., foolish spending, business investments)</p> <p>Other _____</p>	<p>Sleep/Wake Cycle Disturbance</p> <p>Difficulty with falling asleep Waking up in middle of the night Waking up too early Drowsy/groggy during the day Wants to sleep all day</p> <p>Other _____</p> <p>Apathy</p> <p>Appears withdrawn Lack of interest Not motivated Sits/sleeps all day Does not participate in activity</p> <p>Other _____</p>
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Highlight both clusters above and symptoms of agitation below.

SYMPTOMS OF AGITATION

<p>Agitation Physically Aggressive</p> <p>Hitting Pushing Scratching Grabbing Kicking Biting Spitting</p> <p>Other _____</p>	<p>Agitation Verbally Aggressive</p> <p>Screaming Cursing Temper outbursts Aggressive and inappropriate social comments Aggressive verbal sexual advances</p> <p>Other _____</p>	<p>Agitation Physically Non-aggressive</p> <p>General restlessness Repetitive purposeless motor activity Pacing Hiding objects Inappropriate handling of objects Shadowing Exit-seeking Inappropriate dressing/undressing</p> <p>Other _____</p>	<p>Agitation Verbally Non-aggressive</p> <p>Negativism Chanting Repetitive sentences Constant interruptions Constant requests for attention</p> <p>Other _____</p>
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Definition of Agitation

- Some patients have symptoms that do not neatly fit into the better-defined symptom complexes of BPSD (e.g., psychosis, depression, or anxiety).
- These symptoms are consigned to the "grab bag" category of agitation.
- Agitation can be defined as inappropriate verbal, vocal, or motor activity that is not judged by an outside observer to result directly from the needs or confusion of the person.

Name of Person Completing Form (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

SIDE B

Patient Name: _____
 Age: _____

Behaviour Frequency (Rate 1 to 5)	Severity (Rate 1 to 5) How difficult is it to distract or redirect the patient?	Impact (Rate 1 to 5) Potential harm to self/others
5: Constant	5: Impossible to direct patient	5: Extreme (serious harm)
4: Several times a day	4: Directable with major problem	4: Intense (significant harm)
3: At least once daily	3: Directable with moderate problem	3: Moderate (moderate harm)
2: Present but negligible	2: Directable with minor problem	2: Minor (minor harm)
1: Almost never	1: Directable	1: None

INSTRUCTIONS
SIDE A – highlight all the behaviours in the clusters and symptoms of agitation
SIDE B – rate behaviour frequency, severity, and impact, THEN
 – mark the overall rating of behaviour disturbance – clusters and symptoms
 Start a new sheet each time a new set of significant new behaviours emerges.

Place checkmarks in chart below according to your assessment based on the above criteria.
 Transfer your markings to the next page to visually see the frequency, severity and impact of behaviours over time.

F = Overall Behaviour Frequency
 S = Severity
 I = Impact

Overall rating of behavioural disturbance – cluster(s)/symptom(s)		F	S	I	F	S	I	F	S	I	F	S	I	F	S	I	F	S	I	F	S	I	
	5																						
	4																						
	3																						
	2																						
	1																						
		1 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			2 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			3 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			4 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			5 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			6 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			7 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			
		8 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			9 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			10 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			11 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			12 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			13 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			14 Time: _____ Date: _____ Meds given: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Other interventions: _____ Comments: _____			

Time Frame
 Choose time frame being rated:
Shift
Day

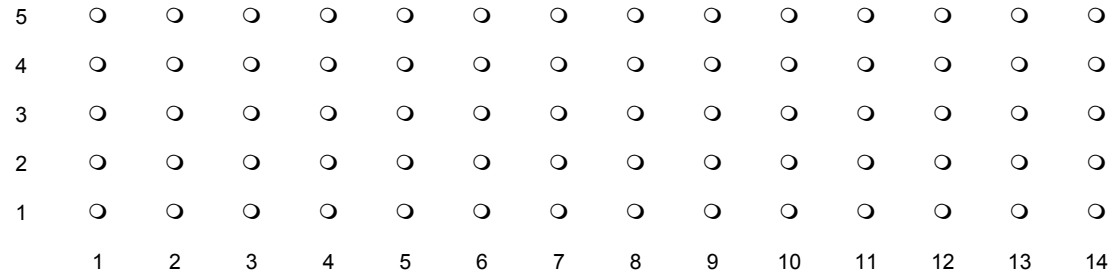
Time Frame
 Choose time frame being rated:
Shift
Day

Name of Person Completing Form (Print): _____ Signature: _____

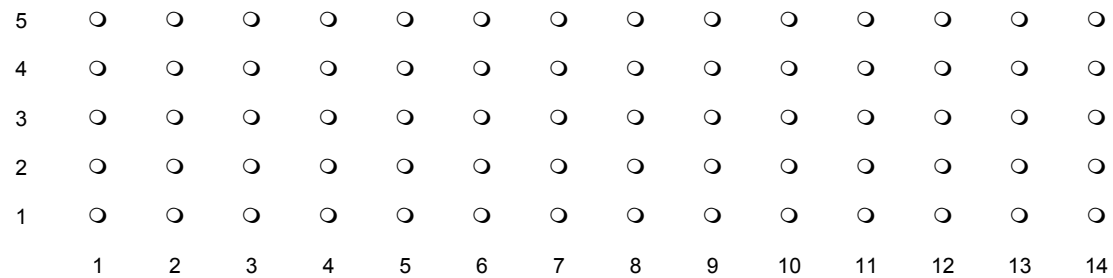
TRACKING OF GLOBAL OVERALL IMPRESSION

Transfer your markings from SIDE B to the charts below to visually see the frequency, severity and impact of behaviours over time.

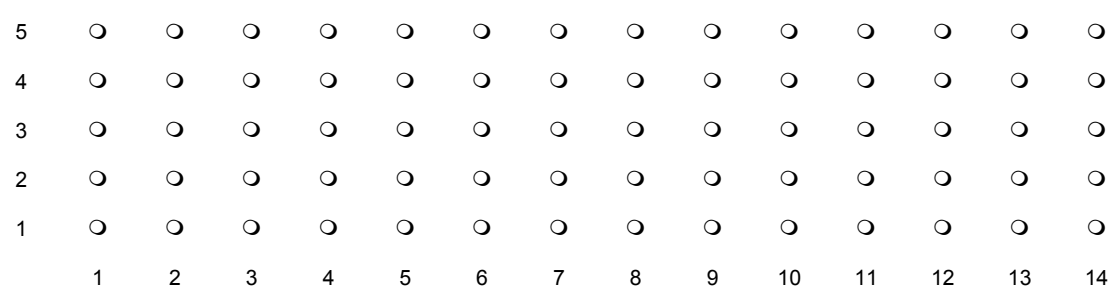
F = Overall Behaviour Frequency



S = Severity



I = Impact



Comments:
