

Eli's Rehab Report

Reader Question: Pare Down Your Eval Time With a Questionnaire

Question: In our facility, we have a lot of Medicare patients whom we ask very detailed ADL questions on their first visit. Documenting the Q&As, as well as doing the evaluation to check some of these ADLs, takes a long time -- not to mention stumbling blocks since we don't have a kitchen facility to test those ADLs. Would it be sufficient to give the patient a questionnaire to fill out and have that as documentation for the ADLs?

Rhode Island Subscriber

Answer: Absolutely. Look at CMS' recently recommended outpatient measurement tools, such as AM-PAC, Optimal, NOMS and FOTO. You'll notice that the tools involve questionnaires that either the patient, the caregiver, their family, or you as the therapist can complete, depending on the tool.

Good idea: Make sure your objective data agrees with the patient's responses. For example, if the patient notes on your questionnaire that he "can't do overhead tasks at home," but your range of motion test shows 170-180 degrees for flexion and abduction, and the muscle strength test shows 5/5 (normal), that's not jibing with what the patient's telling you -- and that could lead to payer scrutiny.

-- Reader Questions were answered by **Rick Gawenda, PT**, director of physical medicine and rehabilitation at Detroit Receiving Hospital and owner of Gawenda Seminars.