



PRURITUS

## INSTRUMENTS FOR ITCH ASSESSMENT: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR THE STUDY OF ITCH

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Chronic pruritus is a frequent, multidimensional and subjective symptom. Affected patients report interindividual variations on its impact on their quality of life, decline in quality of sleep and development of mental disorders. Pruritus parameter such as localization or scratching behaviour show variations and are not useful to monitor the symptom course in a collective of patients. The decrease in pruritus intensity is used to determine the efficacy of new substances in clinical trials. Monodimensional intensity scales as the visual analogue scale (VAS) and numerical rating scale (NRS) comprise the most frequently utilized tools for self-reporting itch intensity. These scales have a useful range of advantages, however, due to many known confounders, they may not indicate the real symptom regression, as pruritus often varies over time, leading to inconsistent study data and diminished data sensitivity. To better assess the course of pruritus, novel instruments have been created to supplement the available scales. Patients' global impression of change is a prime example of this, as it provides a more representative direction of the symptom course than just scales. The verbal rating scale can be used to make an evaluation of other concomitant qualities, in addition to pruritus, such as burning, pain and stinging and has been validated specifically for this purpose. Patients with a disease such as atopic dermatitis or chronic prurigo often report sensations of both pruritus and pain. The ItchyQoL is a pruritus-specific questionnaire pertaining to patient quality of life that can potentially be applied to all types of pruritus. The 5PLQ is a novel version shortened for use in clinical trials and routine care that has been validated in multiple languages. Psychometric analyses demonstrated the feasibility of these instruments which are available for the use in routine care and clinical trials.

