

The McGill Pain Questionnaire

Purpose

The McGill Pain Questionnaire (MPQ) (Melzack, 1983) provides a valid, reliable, rapid and consistent way of determining a patient's subjective pain experience.

Administration

The patient is provided with a form comprising instructions and 20 word groups. The patient is instructed to read each word group and decide whether there is a word in the group which describes the pain he/she is experiencing there and then. The patient should circle one word in the group, which describes their pain. If there is no word in the group, which describes their pain, they are to move on to the next group until they have completed each of the 20 groups.

Groups 1 to 10 are words used to describe sensory experience, groups 11 to 15 are affective words, 16 is evaluative and 17 to 20 are miscellaneous groups.

Scoring

Each word in the group has a rank value as follows:

WORD	RANK	WORD	RANK
#1	1	#4	4
#2	2	#5	5
#3	3	#6	6

Score each word group according to the word the patient circles and write the score alongside the group number. Add categories 1 to 10 and record this next to "sensory". Add groups 11 to 15 and recorded this next to "affective". Write the score for group 16 next to "evaluative". Add scores for groups 17 to 20 and write this next to "miscellaneous". Lastly, add all four categories, ie., groups 1 to 20, and write this next to "Total".

Interpretation

A score of 30 or greater indicates poor psychodynamics.

The test may also be used as an evaluative tool to assess pain before and after treatment techniques or medical procedures. It can also be useful for repeat testing in a work hardening program.

The test takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete (depending on the literacy and vocabulary of the patient) and takes approximately 3 minutes to score.

McGill Instructions

Some of the words below describe your present pain. Circle ONLY those words that best describe it. Leave out any category that is not suitable. Use only a single word in each appropriate category – the only one that applies best.

1.
Flickering
Quivering
Pulsing
Throbbing
Beating
Pounding

2.
Jumping
Flashing
Shooting

3.
Pricking
Boring
Drilling
Stabbing
Lancinating

4.
Sharp
Cutting
Lacerating

5.
Pinching
Pressing
Gnawing
Cramping

6.
Tugging
Pulling
Wrenching

7.
Hot
Burning
Scalding
Searing

8.
Tingling
Itchy
Smarting
Stinging

9.
Dull
Sore
Hurting
Aching
Heavy

10.
Tender
Taut
Rasping
Splitting

11.
Tiring
Exhausting

12.
Sickening
Suffocating

13.
Fearful
Frightful
Terrifying

14.
Punishing
Grueling
Cruel
Vicious
Killing

15.
Wretched
Blinding

16.
Annoying
Troublesome
Miserable
Intense
Unbearable

17.
Spreading
Radiating
Penetrating
Piercing

18.
Tight
Numb
Drawing
Squeezing
Tearing

19.
Cool
Cold
Freezing

20.
Nagging
Nauseating
Agonizing
Dreadful
Torturing