

## **PALO ALTO CENTER FOR PULMONARY DISEASE PREVENTION Nicotine Withdrawal Symptom (NWS) Scale\***

(Instructions, Scoring & Use)

*Quantitative NWS Scale Developed by & Scoring Information Prepared by:*

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\* Measure nicotine withdrawal symptom (NWS) severity score at each visit using this Scale.

\* Based on validated Hughes-Hatsukami University of Minnesota Scale.

\* This scale quantitatively measures nicotine withdrawal symptom severity. (**NB:** Professor Hughes advises that the scale NOT be "labeled a withdrawal scale because [patients can be] confused by filling out a 'nicotine withdrawal' scale prior to stopping smoking and will sometimes not report a symptom [after stopping smoking] if they do not believe it is due to withdrawal."<sup>343</sup>)

**Accordingly, this scale is named Medical Symptom Check-List.**

\* To calculate quantitative score:

o After patient has circled one, and only one, number in each item's Likert scale, copy the circled number into the open square to the far right.

\* Only "classic" DSM-III-R or DSM-IV nicotine withdrawal symptoms have an open square - p - for this purpose (there are 12 included on this scale).

\* The symptoms with a shaded square - - in the far right column are withdrawal signs or symptoms not classified as such in DSM-III-R or DSM-IV, but which most experts regard as highly likely to be valid nicotine withdrawal symptoms (e.g., #2. Constipation, #12 Difficulty Remaining Asleep, #14. Pimples, or #18. Mouth Sores). Others are potential medication side-effects (e.g., #7. Bizarre/Vivid Dreams or Nightmares or #11. Difficulty Falling Asleep).

\* Use this Medical Symptom Check-List to measure NWS severity for several visits before target stop date (TSD)

o Establishes baseline score out of 48-point max (the higher the score the more severe the patient's nicotine withdrawal)

o Use at each visit after TSD.

\* Adjust medication(s) and dose(s) to keep nicotine withdrawal symptom score <16/48 points, or <25% of baseline score, whichever is the lower score.

\* Optimal nicotine withdrawal symptom score <8/48 points or <5%-10% of baseline score after TSD, whichever is the lower score.

o With Craving/Desire to Smoke a Cigarette = 0 (to 1, *maximum*) out of 4 points.

o And no single withdrawal symptom item accounting for 3-4 points out of the <8/48 points.

*Violation of the above goals for suppressing nicotine withdrawal symptoms (NWS) dooms the patient to **treatment failure** (i.e., return to tobacco use).*

This form and scoring instructions may be duplicated without restriction for patient-care or educational purposes.

\*This is a quantitative modification of the validated Hughes-Hatsukami Scale that Dr. Sachs reviewed with Dr. Hughes on 2/28/2008. Dr. Sachs and others have used this scale in >600 patients in his clinical practice.