

CLINICAL TIP

Assessing Changes in Faecal Incontinence

In clinical practice it is vital that we have objective measures that can monitor changes in our patient's symptoms. Assessments are most useful when they are easy to use, relevant to the patient's presenting problem and have good reliability when assessing on multiple time points.

Three commonly used scoring systems to monitor change in Faecal Incontinence include:

1. **St Mark's Incontinence Score (SMIS)** **0 - 24**
2. **Wexner Continence Grading System (Wexner)** **0 - 20**
3. **Revised Faecal Incontinence Scale (RFIS) - NEW THIS YEAR!** **0 - 20**

1. St Mark's Incontinence Score ('SMIS' or 'Vaizey Score') - **SCORE = 0 - 24**

This Scoring System was first published in 1999 by the Colorectal Department of St Mark's Hospital (UK). This is the unit also famous for the St Mark's pudendal nerve terminal motor latency electrode.

As the paper was published by the lead author "Vaizey", it is also known as the "Vaizey Score".

The lowest score that can be given is 0 (complete continence), with the highest score being 24 (completely incontinent).

Type of Incontinence	<u>NEVER</u> Never	<u>RARELY</u> <1/month	<u>SOMETIMES</u> >1/month but <1/week	<u>USUALLY</u> >1/week but <1/day	<u>Always</u> >1/day
PART ONE					
Incont of Solid Stool	0	1	2	3	4
Incont of Liquid Stool	0	1	2	3	4
Incont of Gas	0	1	2	3	4
Lifestyle Alteration	0	1	2	3	4
PART TWO					
				No	Yes
	Needing to wear a pad or plug			0	2
	Taking constipating medicines			0	2
	Lack of ability to defer defecation for 15minutes			0	4

Reference: Vaizey, Carapeti, Cahill and Kamm 1999, Prospective comparison of faecal incontinence grading systems, Gut, vol 44, 77-80.

2. Wexner Score

SCORE = 0 – 20

The Wexner Score has been around longer than the St Mark's Score. However, it has been criticised by some as it does not include faecal urgency.

Type of Incontinence	<u>NEVER</u> Never	<u>RARELY</u> <1/month	<u>SOMETIMES</u> >1/month but <1/week	<u>USUALLY</u> >1/week but <1/day	<u>Always</u> >1/day
Solid	0	1	2	3	4
Liquid	0	1	2	3	4
Gas	0	1	2	3	4
Wears Pad	0	1	2	3	4
Lifestyle Alteration	0	1	2	3	4

Ref: Jorge and Wexner 1993: Etiology and management of fecal incontinence. Dis Colon Rectum, vol 36, 77-97.

3. Revised Faecal Incontinence Score (RFIS) – 0 - 20

This is a new faecal incontinence score only released this year. The questionnaire is copyrighted to the University of Wollongong with a license to the University of Melbourne and the Commonwealth of Australia.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you leak, have accidents or lose control with solid stool?
2. Do you leak, have accidents or lose control with liquid stool?
3. Do you leak stool if you don't get to the toilet in time?
4. Does stool leak so that you have to change your underwear?
5. Does bowel or stool leakage cause you to alter your lifestyle?

➤ Each Question scored from 0 (never) to 4 (always)

- Never = 0
- Rarely ie less than once in the past 4 weeks = 1
- Sometimes ie less than once per week = 2
- Often or usually ie less than once per day, more than once per week = 3
- Always ie once or more per day = 4

FINAL NOTE

Each of the above three scoring systems are easy to use, validated scoring systems that can be used in the clinic to monitor change in faecal incontinence symptoms over time. They are also commonly used in research papers analysing the effectiveness of faecal incontinence treatments.