

NIH Stroke Scale — Simplified (NIHSS (Lite))

Category: Neurology, Emergency | Items: 13 | Time: ~2-3 min

Description / When to Use

Stroke severity

Instructions for Respondent

Please read each statement carefully and respond based on how you have felt over the specified time period. There are 13 items in this scale. Estimated completion time: 2-3 min.

Scale Items

1. 1a. Level of consciousness
0 = Alert | 1 = Drowsy | 2 = Stuporous | 3 = Coma
2. 1b. LOC questions (month, age)
0 = Both correct | 1 = One correct | 2 = Both wrong
3. 1c. LOC commands (close eyes, grip)
0 = Both correct | 1 = One correct | 2 = Neither
4. 2. Best gaze
0 = Normal | 1 = Partial gaze palsy | 2 = Forced deviation
5. 3. Visual fields
0 = No loss | 1 = Partial hemianopia | 2 = Complete hemianopia | 3 = Bilateral hemianopia
6. 4. Facial palsy
0 = None | 1 = Minor | 2 = Partial | 3 = Complete
7. 5. Motor arm (worst side)
0 = No drift | 1 = Drift | 2 = Some effort against gravity | 3 = No effort against gravity | 4 = No movement
8. 6. Motor leg (worst side)
0 = No drift | 1 = Drift | 2 = Some effort against gravity | 3 = No effort against gravity | 4 = No movement
9. 7. Limb ataxia
0 = Absent | 1 = One limb | 2 = Two limbs
10. 8. Sensory
0 = Normal | 1 = Mild loss | 2 = Severe loss
11. 9. Best language
0 = Normal | 1 = Mild aphasia | 2 = Severe aphasia | 3 = Mute / global
12. 10. Dysarthria
0 = Normal | 1 = Mild | 2 = Severe
13. 11. Extinction / inattention
0 = None | 1 = One modality | 2 = Multiple modalities

Scoring Guide

Sum all 13 items. Total range 0-34.

Cutoff Interpretation

Score Range	Severity	Recommended Action
0–0	No stroke symptoms	No stroke.
1–4	Minor stroke	Minor.
5–15	Moderate stroke	Moderate.
16–20	Moderate–severe stroke	Moderate–severe.
21–42	Severe stroke	Severe.

Psychometric Properties

See original validation study for reliability and validity data.

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Citation (APA Format)

Brott T et al. Stroke. 1989;20(7):864-870.

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Disclaimer: Simplified for bedside use; the official NIHSS includes additional scoring rules and untestable codes. NIH certification recommended for research use. Educational use only.