

Assessment of Patients (AOP)

Overview

The goal of assessment is to determine the care, treatment, and services that will meet the patient's initial and continuing needs. An effective patient-assessment process results in decisions about the patient's treatment needs for emergency, elective, or planned care, even when the patient's condition changes. Patient assessment is an ongoing, dynamic process that takes place in many inpatient and outpatient settings and departments and clinics. Patient assessment consists of three primary processes:

1. Collecting information and data on the patient's physical, psychological, and social status, and health history
2. Analyzing the data and information, including the results of laboratory testing, diagnostic imaging, and physiologic monitoring, to identify the patient's health care needs
3. Developing a plan of care to meet the patient's identified needs

Patient needs must be reassessed throughout the course of care, treatment, and services. Reassessment is key to understanding the patient's response to the care, treatment, and services provided and is essential in identifying whether care decisions are appropriate and effective.

Assessment activities may vary between settings, as defined by the hospital's leaders. Information gathered at the patient's first contact may indicate the need for more data or a more intensive assessment. At a minimum, the need for further assessment is determined by the care, treatment, and services sought and the patient's presenting condition(s).

Patient assessment is appropriate when it considers the patient's condition, age, health needs, and requests or preferences. These processes are most effectively carried out when the various health care practitioners responsible for the patient work together.

Standards

The following is a list of all standards for this function. They are presented here for your convenience without their intent statements or measurable elements. For more information about these standards, please see the next section in this chapter, Standards, Intents, and Measurable Elements.

Patient Assessment

- AOP.01.00** All patients have their health care needs identified through an assessment process that has been defined by the hospital.
- AOP.01.01** Each patient's initial assessment includes a health history and an assessment of the patient's physical, psychological, spiritual/cultural, social, and economic needs.
- AOP.01.02** The hospital has a process for accepting initial assessments from outside sources.
- AOP.01.03** Patients are screened for nutritional, functional, and other special needs and are further assessed when indicated by the screening.

AOP.01.04 All patients are screened for pain and assessed when pain is present.

AOP.01.05 All patients are reassessed at intervals based on their condition and treatment.

Patient Falls

AOP.02.00 The hospital develops and implements a process to reduce the risk of falls, and patient harm resulting from falls.

Laboratory Services

AOP.03.00 Laboratory services are available to meet patient needs, and all laboratory services meet applicable local and national standards, laws, and regulations.

AOP.03.01 A qualified individual(s) is responsible for managing the clinical laboratory service or pathology service, and all laboratory staff are qualified to perform the tests and interpret the results.

AOP.03.02 The hospital has defined requirements for the oversight and supervision of the point-of-care testing program.

AOP.03.03 Laboratory results are reported within time frames defined by hospital policy.

AOP.03.04 All laboratory testing equipment is regularly inspected, maintained, and calibrated, and appropriate records are maintained for these activities.

AOP.03.05 Essential reagents and supplies are available, and all reagents are evaluated to ensure accuracy and precision of results.

AOP.03.06 Procedures for collecting, identifying, handling, safely transporting, and disposing of specimens are established and implemented.

AOP.03.07 Established norms and ranges are used to interpret and to report clinical laboratory results.

AOP.03.08 The hospital has implemented processes for quality control and proficiency testing of laboratory services.

AOP.03.09 The hospital ensures the quality of services provided by contracted laboratories.

Blood Bank and/or Transfusion Services

AOP.04.00 A qualified individual(s) is responsible for blood bank and/or transfusion services and ensures that services adhere to laws and regulations and recognized standards of practice.

AOP.04.01 Clinical guidelines and procedures are implemented for the handling and administration of blood and blood products.

Radiology and Diagnostic Imaging Services

AOP.05.00 Radiology and diagnostic imaging services are available to meet patient needs, and all services meet applicable local and national standards, laws, and regulations.

AOP.05.01 A qualified individual(s) is responsible for managing the radiology and diagnostic imaging services, and individuals with proper qualifications and experience perform diagnostic imaging studies, interpret the results, and report the results.

AOP.05.02 A radiation and/or diagnostic imaging safety program for patients, staff, and visitors is implemented and is compliant with applicable professional standards, laws, and regulations.

AOP.05.03 Radiology and diagnostic imaging study results are available in a timely way as defined by hospital policy.

- AOP.05.04** All equipment used to conduct radiology and diagnostic imaging studies is regularly inspected, maintained, and calibrated, and appropriate records are maintained for these activities.
- AOP.05.05** The hospital has implemented quality control procedures for radiology and diagnostic imaging services.
- AOP.05.06** The hospital ensures the quality of services provided by all outside contracted sources of radiology and diagnostic imaging services.

Nuclear Medicine Services

- AOP.06.00** When applicable, the hospital establishes and implements a nuclear medicine safety program that complies with applicable professional standards, laws, and regulations.

Standards, Intents, and Measurable Elements

Patient Assessment

Standard AOP.01.00

All patients have their health care needs identified through an assessment process that has been defined by the hospital.

Intent of AOP.01.00

The effective assessment process drives decisions about the patient's needs for care, treatment, and services. Because decisions are made based on assessments, the assessment process is dynamic and ongoing throughout the patient care continuum.

Patient assessments determine care needs, even when the patient's condition changes. Patient assessment includes three primary processes:

- Collecting information and data on the patient's health history and their physical, psychological, and social needs
- Analyzing the assessment data, including any diagnostic tests, to identify the patient's health care needs
- Using the information to develop a plan of care specific to the patient's needs

When a patient is admitted to or registered for care, whether inpatient or outpatient care/treatment, a complete assessment needs to be performed related to the reason for care. The information required depends on the patient's needs and the setting in which care is being provided (for example, inpatient or outpatient care). Hospital policies define the minimum content of assessments for clinical staff to include in their assessments and in all care settings. The hospital identifies any specific assessment data that must be included by various clinical staff.

Assessments are performed by each discipline within its scope of practice, licensure, applicable laws and regulations, or certification. Only qualified individuals conduct the assessments.

All the content from assessments must be available when treatment is initiated.