

## Journal Watch – Symptom Assessment – March 2018

Article:

The Rotterdam Elderly Pain Observation Scale (REPOS) is reliable and valid for non-communicative end-of-life patients

Masman AD, van Dijk M, van Rosmalen J, Baar FPM, Tibboel D, Boerlage AA.

BMC Palliative Care 2018 February 17(1):34

Article link: DOI:[10.1186/s12904-018-0280-x](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12904-018-0280-x)

**Review:**

**Strengths:** Appropriate palliative population given 90% of the patients had an advanced malignancy and were observed near end of life (median of 3 days before death). Decent population size of 100 patients. The REPOS is a simple tool that provides a systematic approach, can be learned quickly, and has clear definitions as well as a cut off of when interventions should be given.

**Weaknesses:** This is an observational study with considerable room for bias given no blinding or placebo (i.e. would expect to rate patient in lower pain after an intervention is given). The patients were also all from a single center in the Netherlands, which may hinder generalizability. The REPOS is only available in Dutch and English and originally was designed for a different patient population (elderly in nursing homes). Non-communication has a variable etiology with different pain experiences for each (e.g. dementia vs chemical sedation). Lastly, emotional behavior is not always related to pain.

**Relevance to Palliative Care:** REPOS provides a simple pain assessment tool for a common and vulnerable patient population (non-communicative patients) in palliative care whose needs could easily be overlooked.