PROMIS 29 Information

PROMIS 29 is a free patient reported outcome measure that assesses health across seven domains:

- Physical function
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Sleep disturbance
- Ability to participate in social roles and activities
- Pain interference

Each domain contains four questions. A separate question records pain intensity from 0 to 10.

> *"PROMIS 29 is useful because it captures changes that may matter to patients beyond pain alone. In our UK study, clinically meaningful improvements occurred in anxiety, depression, fatigue, pain intensity and pain interference after four weeks of chiropractic care."*

Using PROMIS 29 to monitor patients

- Complete it at baseline, preferably before care begins.
- Repeat it at a consistent reassessment point, such as every 4-6 weeks or every 12 visit, whenever you currently do your patient/client re-exams.
- Use the same questionnaire version and administration method each time.
- Compare each patient with their own baseline rather than focusing only on population norms.
- Ask which domains matter most to the patient and connect changes to their personal goals.
- Look at the overall pattern. Pain may remain present while fatigue, mood, function or social participation improves.
- Use scores to begin a conversation, not to make a diagnosis.
- Consider further assessment or referral when responses reveal significant emotional distress, sleep problems or functional impairment.

Simple clinical scoring

1. Add the four responses within each domain. Each domain will have a raw score from 4 to 20.
2. Keep pain intensity as a separate score from 0 to 10.
3. Record the scores at the initial assessment and again at an appropriate review, such as four weeks.
4. Compare each domain only with the same domain over time.

Improvement means:

Domain	Direction of improvement
Physical function	Higher score
Social participation	Higher score
Anxiety	Lower score
Depression	Lower score
Fatigue	Lower score
Sleep disturbance	Lower score
Pain interference	Lower score
Pain intensity	Lower score

Do not add all the domains together to create one overall clinical score. PROMIS 29 is most useful as a profile showing which aspects of health are improving, unchanged or worsening.

How to interpret raw scores

For everyday clinical monitoring, the important questions are:

- Is the score moving in a favourable direction?
- Is the change more than a minor fluctuation?
- Has the patient noticed the change?
- Has it affected something important in the patient's life?

There is no single raw score change that is clinically meaningful for every PROMIS domain and every patient population. A change of one point may simply reflect normal variation. A change of several points is more convincing, particularly when it is

supported by the patient's experience, but it should not automatically be labelled a validated clinically meaningful difference.

For example, if anxiety falls from 16 to 12 and the patient reports feeling calmer, sleeping better and being more able to manage daily demands, that is likely to be clinically meaningful for that patient.

What does "clinically meaningful improvement" mean?

In a research study, ***a statistically significant improvement*** means that a group difference is unlikely to be explained by chance. ***A clinically meaningful improvement*** means that the change is large enough to make a noticeable and worthwhile difference to the patient.

If you use the Promise 29 in your practice, on re-evaluation, if there are positive changes I would ask the individual patient:

- "On this questionnaire, it indicates that you have been experiencing less anxiety/depression/fatigue (whatever has improved more than one value). Does this score reflect a change you have noticed?"
- "Has the change made it easier to do anything important to you?"
- "Would you consider this improvement worthwhile?"

In this way they know you are taking this serious and bothering to follow up on changes to care.

In our UK study, we used to full blown research grade scoring of the Promise 29, converting the scores into something called a T score. The chiropractic group improved significantly in anxiety, depression, fatigue, pain intensity and pain interference. The nine point difference between groups on the overall measure used in that analysis exceeded the published minimal clinically important difference. This suggested that the improvement was not only statistically detectable but in the research, world is also considered clinically meaningful at the group level. However, nine points should not be used as a universal cutoff for individual patients or for each separate PROMIS domain, because you are looking at the raw values. Haavik et al., 2024

When are T scores useful?

T scores are useful when comparing patients with population norms, conducting research or applying formally established change thresholds. If clinical software produces them automatically, they can be valuable. However, for routine monitoring of the same patient over time, recording the separate raw domain scores is a reasonable and much easier approach.

The main value of PROMIS 29 is not generating a complicated number. It is identifying aspects of the patient's health that may otherwise be missed and observing whether these change during care.

PROMIS measures are publicly available without licence fees or royalties for use in clinical practice. Electronic platforms may charge for automated administration or scoring. Official PROMIS information