Pediatric Early Warning Score (PEWS)

Introduction: The Pediatric Early Warning Score (PEWS) identifies pediatric patients at risk for clinical deterioration and can help less-experienced providers get a sense of which patients may need escalation of care.

Why to Use
The PEWS provides an objective measurement for patients who "look sick." It can help less-experienced providers get a sense of which patients may need escalation of care. It can be used in pediatric patients of all ages.

When to Use
Use in pediatric patients admitted to the hospital.

Next Steps
Consider escalation of care in patients with high PEWS (≥ 3), including endorsing to senior staff, increasing frequency of vital signs measurements and clinical assessments, and/or consultation to an intensive care unit.

Evidence Appraisal
The PEWS was developed by expert consensus by a multidisciplinary group at Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals National Health Service Trust in the United Kingdom, in order for nurses and junior medical staff to identify pediatric patients who are at risk for clinical deterioration. It was intended to serve as a pediatric-specific version of the National Early Warning System (NEWS) Score, which was developed in an effort to standardize the approach to detecting clinical deterioration in acutely ill adult patients in the United Kingdom.

Triggers were identified by polling a multidisciplinary group at all levels of patient care on which clinical features they considered concerning, including appearance and vital signs. The criteria were revised based on a pilot that identified patients who deteriorated but were not identified by the original score.

Several studies have validated the PEWS, including one by Duncan et al in 2006 that found an AUROC (area under the receiver operating characteristic curve) of 0.90, with 78% sensitivity and 95% specificity at a score of 5.

The PEWS has been adapted for use in multiple settings, including academic centers and community hospitals.

Calculator Creator
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Click here to read more about Mr. Monaghan.

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References
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