

Stroke Patient and Stroke Therapies Assessment: ED NIHSS & Stroke Scales Use for ED Stroke Therapies

Andrew Asimos, MD, FACEP



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Andrew Asimos, MD, FACEP




Andrew Asimos, MD, FACEP

Adjunct Associate Professor

Department of Emergency Medicine
University of North Carolina School of
Medicine at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC

Andrew Asimos, MD, FACEP




Attending Physician
Emergency Medicine

Carolinas Medical Center
Department of Emergency Medicine

Charlotte, NC


Andrew Asimos, MD, FACEP



Session Objectives

- Discuss how the NIHSS should be utilized by emergency physicians in assessing ischemic stroke patients in the Emergency department.
- Determine what emergency physicians need to know about stroke scales when evaluating stroke therapies that could be utilized in treating ED ischemic stroke patients.


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Case Presentation...


- 67 yo male transported as a "Code stroke" based on a positive Prehospital Stroke Screen
- Symptom onset 30 minutes before paramedic arrival
 - Left arm weakness, slurred speech and facial droop
- PMHx of hypertension
 - Admits to being non-compliant with his medications
- In the ED, alert with a right sided gaze preference and weakness of his left arm and face
- Accucheck is 97, BP 170/90 mm Hg

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Clinical Questions

- What is the role of the NIHSS in the evaluation of ED ischemic stroke patients?
- How should the NIHSS be used to assess the potential use of IV tPA in ED ischemic stroke patients?
- What are the Modified Rankin Scale and Barthel index, and what do they measure?

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Clinical Questions


- How have the NIHSS, MRS, and BI used as a measure of outcome in clinical trials of stroke therapies?
- How can the MRS and BI be used to determine the utility of stroke therapies in the ED?
- How can the number needed to treat calculation be performed based on these scales and study outcomes, and what does it mean to the clinical practice of Emergency Medicine?

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NIH Stroke Scale (NIHSS)


- First developed for acute stroke trials as a research study tool
- Standardized mechanism for defining stroke severity based on neurologic deficits
 - 15 item ordinal scale designed to rate neurological impairment
- Widely used in US clinical practice
- Helps to predict outcome with or without t-PA treatment
- Helps to assess risk of hemorrhage after t-PA treatment

Brott T et al. Stroke 1989;20:864-70.
 Goldstein LB et al. Arch Neurol 1989;46:660-2.
 Adams HP et al. Neurology 1999;53:126-31.
 Goldstein LB et al. Arch Neurol 1999;46:660-2.
 Muir KW, et al. Stroke 1996;27(10):1817-20.


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NIH Stroke Scale

Item	Description	Range
1a	Level of Consciousness	0-3
1b	LOC Questions	0-2
1c	LOC Commands	0-2
2	Best Gaze	0-2
3	Best Visual	0-3
4	Facial Palsy	0-3
5	Motor Arm Left	0-4
6	Motor Arm Right	0-4
7	Motor Leg Left	0-4
8	Motor Leg Right	0-4
9	Limb Ataxia	0-2
10	Sensory	0-2
11	Neglect	0-2
12	Dysarthria	0-2
13	Best Language	0-3

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Reliability of NIHSS Items

Item	κ Range
1a. Level of consciousness	0.46 to 0.68
1b. LOC questions	0.44 to 0.94
1c. LOC commands	0.41 to 0.94
2. Gaze	0.33 to 0.82
3. Visual fields	0.57 to 0.90
4. Facial palsy	0.22 to 0.74
5. Arm strength	0.77 to 0.97
6. Leg strength	0.39 to 0.98
7. Limb ataxia	-0.16 to 0.69
8. Sensation	0.39 to 0.89
9. Language	0.60 to 0.84
10. Dysarthria	0.29 to 0.72
11. Extinction/ neglect	0.53 to 0.89

Abbreviations: κ, kappa; LOC, level of consciousness.

Goldstein LB and Simel DL. JAMA 2005;293(19):2391-2402 Andrew Asimos, MD, FACEP 

Reliability of the NIHSS: Analysis of Video Ratings

Patient	Median	5%, 95%	90% spread
10	1	0, 2	2
3	2	1, 4	3
8	2	1, 3	2
1	4	3, 6	3
6	5	3, 8	5
9	7	5, 9	4
7	7	5, 10	5
5	11	9, 14	5
2	17	15, 19	4
4	19	17, 23	6
1	31	26, 34	8

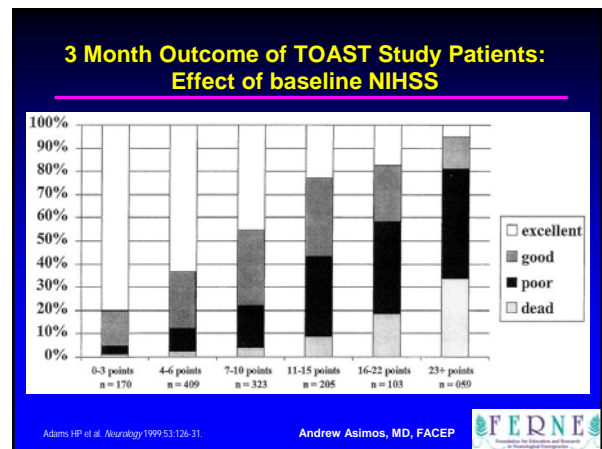
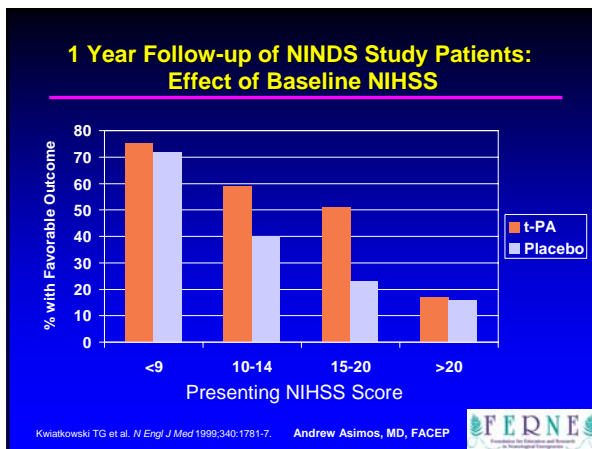
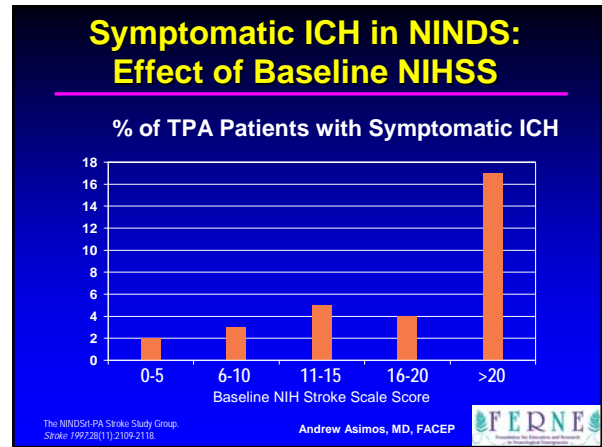
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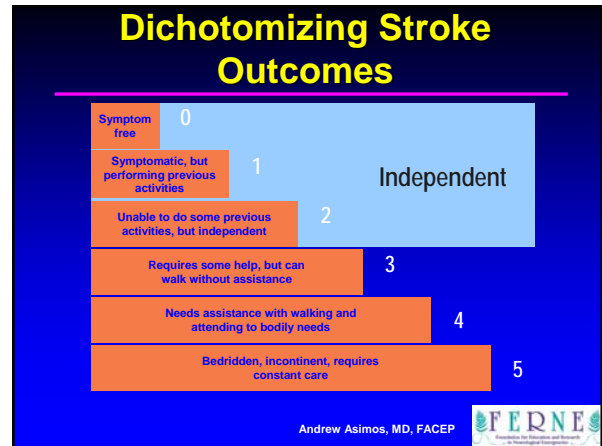
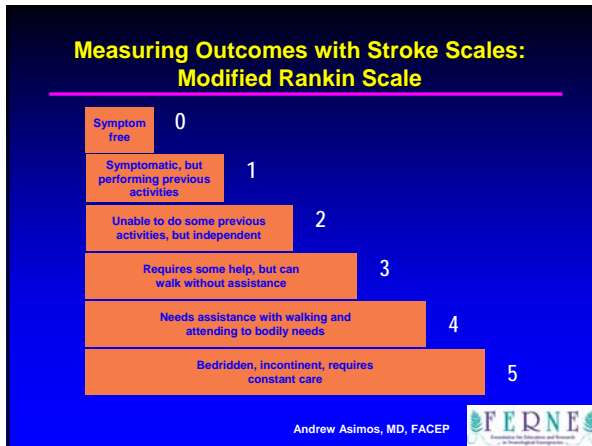
Reliability of the NIHSS: Analysis of Video Ratings

NIHSS Question	Performance Measure	Observed Agreement	Kappa
1a	Level of consciousness	0.92	0.89
1b	LOC questions	0.90	0.85
1c	LOC Commands	1.0	0.99
2	Best Gaze	0.96	0.94
3	Visual Fields	0.94	0.92
4	Facial Palsy	0.74	0.65
5-6	Motor Limbs	0.88-0.97	0.84-0.97
7	Limb Ataxia	0.85	0.80
8	Sensation	0.97	0.96
9	Aphasia	0.70	0.60
10	Dysarthria	0.89	0.85
11	Extinction and Inattention	0.90	0.84

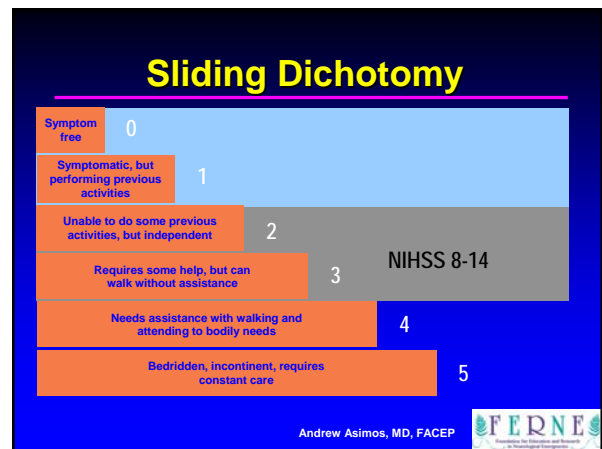
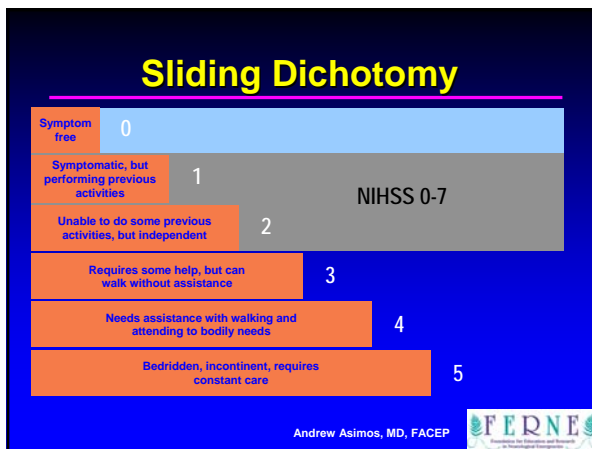
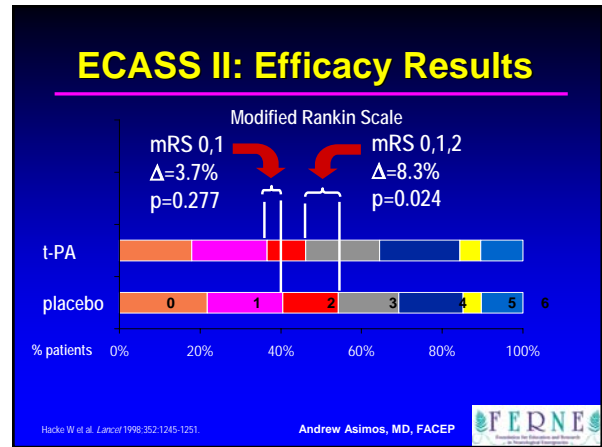
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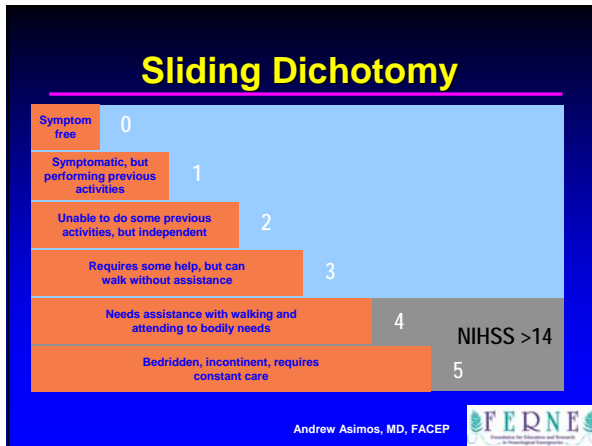
- ### Reliability of the NIHSS: Analysis of Video Ratings
- Conclusions
 - Substantial variability in the overall Stroke Scale score
 - High levels of agreement for many items does not necessarily translate into the total score being highly reliable
 - Facial palsy and aphasia items least reliably assessed
 - Physicians didn't score better than the other professionals
 - Reliability did not improve with testing experience
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- ### Dichotomizing Stroke Outcomes
- Does the treatment make all patients achieve a "good" outcome?
 - Advantages
 - Simple statistical analysis
 - Straightforward clinical interpretation
 - Disadvantages
 - Functional continuum of stroke is broad
 - Eliminates some outcome information
 - Both directions
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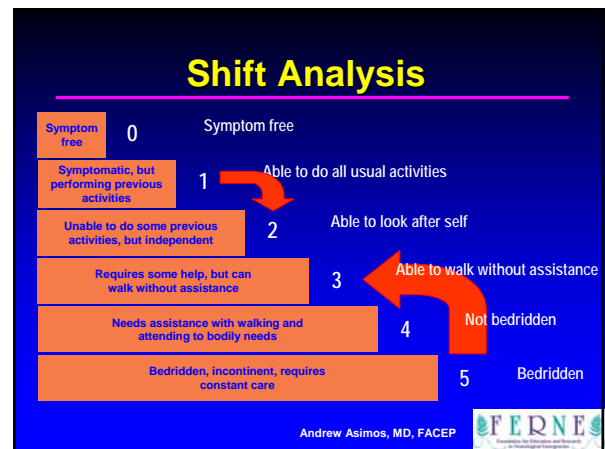
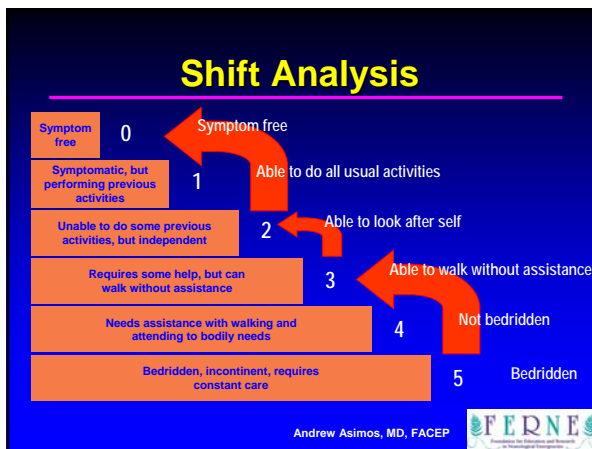
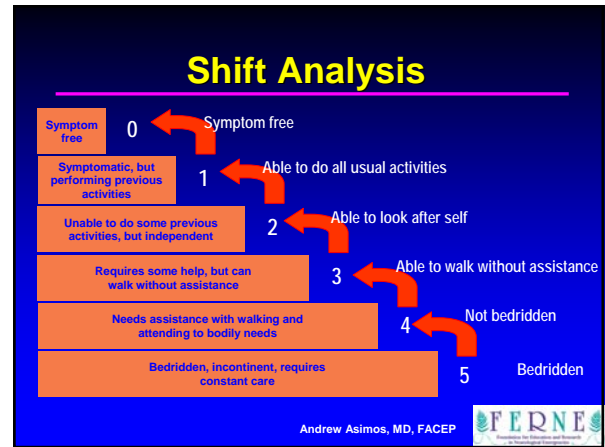
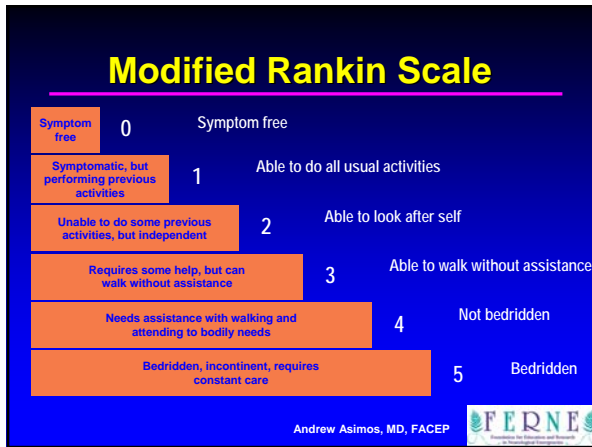




Sliding Dichotomy

- Does the treatment make the patient better based on the patient's initial status?
- Advantages
 - Adjustment for baseline severity
 - Nor fixed target outcome inappropriate for mild or severe patients
- Disadvantages
 - Still a dichotomous analysis
 - Potential to ignore harmful effects occurring at non-specified transitions
 - Requires estimate of treatment effect to identify outcome transitions

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Shift Analysis

- Does the treatment make the patient somewhat better?
- Advantages
 - Analyzes benefit or harm throughout the continuum of disability
 - Does not rely on an estimate of treatment effect to identify outcome transitions
- Disadvantages
 - Statistically complex
 - NNT calculations from theoretical models

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Conclusions

- The NIHSS helps to predict outcome, with or without t-PA treatment, and hemorrhage risk after t-PA treatment
- Different stroke study endpoint analyses have been applied to outcome scales, with each technique offering its own advantages and disadvantages
- Some stroke trials may have missed beneficial or harmful treatment effects because the criteria for judging treatment response were inappropriate for many of the patients studied

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Recommendations

- Understand how to measure the NIHSS and the limitations of the score obtained
- Be knowledgeable of the stroke outcome scores used in trials and how the outcomes were analyzed
- Understand the fundamental questions that can be answered by each study endpoint analysis strategy

Andrew Asimos, MD, FACEP



Questions?

www.FERNE.org

aasimos@carolinas.org
704 355 4212

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