

Quality of Life Scale

By Dr. Alice Villabos, DVM

Pet caregivers can use this scale to determine the success of pet hospice care.
Using a scale of 1 (poor) to 10 (best), patients can be scored

Hurt 1-10

Score:

Adequate pain control, including breathing ability, is first and foremost on the scale. Is the pets' pain successfully managed? Is oxygen necessary?

Hunger 1-10

Score:

Is the pet eating enough? Does hand-feeding help? Does patient require a feeding tube?

Hydration: 1-10

Score:

Is the patient hydrated? For patients not drinking enough, use subcutaneous fluids once or twice daily to supplement fluid intake.

Hygiene: 1-10

Score:

The patient should be kept brushed and cleaned, particularly after elimination. Avoid pressure sores and keep all wounds clean.

Happiness: 1-10

Score:

Does the pet express joy and interest? Is he responsive to the things around him (family, toys, etc)? Is the pet depressed, lonely, anxious, bored or afraid? Can the pet's bed be close to the family activities and not be isolated?

Mobility: 1-10

Score:

Can the patient get up without assistance? Does the pet need human or mechanical help (e.g. cart)? Does he feel like going for a walk? Is he having seizures or stumbling? (some caregivers feel euthanasia is preferable to amputation, but an animal who has limited mobility yet still alert and responsive can have good quality of life as long as caregivers are committed to helping him.)

More good days than bad days: 1-10

Score:

When bad days out number good days, quality of life might be too compromised. When a healthy human-animal bond is no longer possible, the caregiver must be made aware that the end is near. The decision needs to be made if the pet is suffering. If death comes peacefully and painlessly, that is OK.

Acceptable

35

Unacceptable

*adapted by Villabos, A.E., Quality of Life Scale Helps Make Final Call, Veterinary Practice News, Sept. 2004; for Canine and Feline Geriatric Oncology Honoring the Human-Animal Bond, by Beckwell Publishing table 10.1, released 2006

Total score:
0-35 unacceptable
35-70 acceptable

