



Appendix C: Assessing Atrial Fibrillation Symptom Severity with the CCS-SAF Scale¹

The 3 steps of the Canadian Cardiovascular Society (CCS) Severity of Atrial Fibrillation (SAF) Scale:

Step 1: Symptoms

Identify the presence of the following symptoms:

- A. Palpitations
- B. Dyspnea
- C. Dizziness, presyncope, or syncope
- D. Chest pain
- E. Weakness or fatigue

Step 2: Association

Is atrial fibrillation (AF), when present, associated with the symptoms (A – E) listed above?

For example, ascertain if any of the above symptoms are present during AF and likely caused by AF.

Step 3: Functionality

Determine if the symptoms associated with AF (or the treatment of AF) affect the patient's functionality (subjective quality of life).

The CCS-SAF Scale:

Class	Definition
0	Asymptomatic with respect to AF.
1	Symptoms attributable to AF have minimal effect on patient's general quality of life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimal and/or infrequent symptoms; or • single episode of AF without syncope or heart failure.
2	Symptoms attributable to AF have minor effect on patient's general quality of life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mild awareness of symptoms in patients with persistent/permanent AF; or • rare episodes (e.g., less than a few per year) in patients with paroxysmal or intermittent AF.
3	Symptoms attributable to AF have moderate effect on patient's general quality of life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moderate awareness of symptoms on most days in patients with persistent/permanent AF; or • more frequent episodes (e.g., more than every few months) or more severe symptoms, or both, in patients with paroxysmal or intermittent AF.
4	Symptoms attributable to AF have severe effect on patient's general quality of life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very unpleasant symptoms in patients with persistent/paroxysmal AF; and/or • frequent and highly symptomatic episodes in patients with paroxysmal or intermittent AF; and/or syncope thought to be due to AF; and/or • congestive heart failure secondary to AF.

Reference:

1. Dorian P, Cvitkovic SS, Kerr CR, et al. A novel, simple scale for assessing the symptom severity of atrial fibrillation at the bedside: The CCS-SAF Scale. *Can J Cardiol.* 2006;22:383-386.