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

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:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Asymptomatic with respect to AF.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1     | Symptoms attributable to AF have **minimal** effect on patient’s general quality of life:  
- 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:  
- 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:  
- 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:  
- 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:**