

The Clinical Global Impressions (Outcomes)

The CGI is one of the most useful clinical tools currently available for monitoring patient outcomes across multiple clinically relevant domains, over time. It is valid, reliable, builds on clinical expertise and is sensitive to changes in clinical conditions. It can be effectively and efficiently used across cultures, in all ages, across languages, across socio-economic locations, etc. It has been used as a treatment outcome measure in countless treatment research studies across a wide range of different mental disorders.

Once a clinician has learned to apply the CGI it takes less than 10 seconds to write the appropriate score into the patient's chart: thus providing an excellent method for monitoring a patient's progress over time.

Global improvement: Rate total improvement whether or not, in your judgment, it is due entirely to treatment.

Compared to your patient's condition at time of first assessment, how much has s/he changed?

0 = Not assessed	4 = No change
1 = Very much improved	5 = Minimally worse
2 = Much improved	6 = Much worse
3 = Minimally improved	7 = Very much worse

When using the CGI:

1 – Note the appropriate score into the patient's chart based on all the information you have received during the current visit **IN COMPARISON TO THE CONDITION OF THE PATIENT WHEN YOU BEGAN TREATMENT** – not compared to the last time you saw the patient.

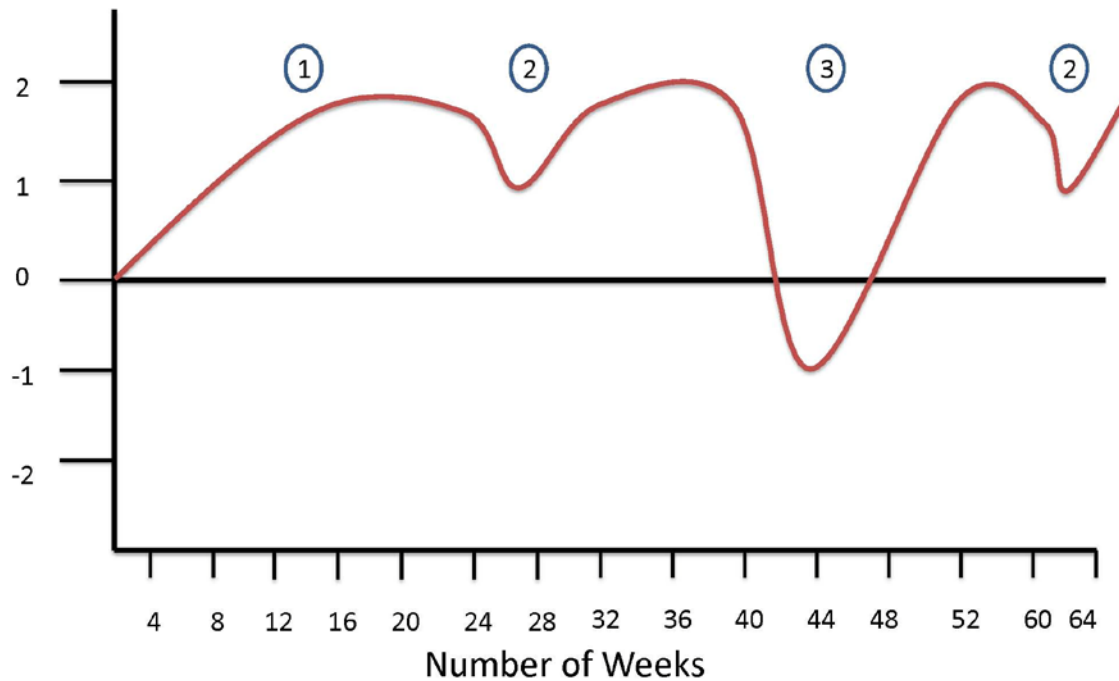
2 – Assess how the patient is doing **GLOBALLY**: including but not necessarily limited to: symptoms; signs; functioning (work; school; family; friends); side effects. Use all sources of information that you have available to you.

3 – A patient can get better or can get worse. Both possibilities are captured by the scale.

4 – The CGI is **NOT** a measure of treatment only. It is a measure of how your patient is doing. This may be a reflection of treatment or of some other factor. For example: a patient who has been scoring plus two for months, today scores minus one, but this is due to the recent death of a family member. In such situations note the non-treatment related reason for the score in the patient's chart. Persistence of low scores may signal relapse.

See Figure 1 for an example of CGI use over time in the treatment of adolescent depression:

Figure 1 : Patient Outcomes Monitoring Using the CGI



Annotations:

1 – The time to good therapeutic response is consistent with expected timelines. It often takes 12 weeks or longer for full treatment response once steady state medication levels are reached and 18 weeks or longer if evidence based psychotherapy alone is being used.

2 – A dip in scores over a short period of time is common. This may be addressed clinically by a phone “check in” between scheduled clinic visits so that an actual relapse is not missed.

3 – This large drop occurred when the teen’s friend moved to another city. If the CGI score had not improved over the next eight weeks, relapse should have been suspected and appropriate anti-relapse interventions provided.