

SEPTEMBER IS CHIARI AWARENESS MONTH

Measuring Outcomes

One of the persistent gaps in Chiari research has been the lack of a standard method of assessing outcomes. Several years ago, a group from the University of Chicago tried to address this by proposing the Chicago Chiari Outcome Scale (CCOS). The scale is comprised of 4 areas (pain, other symptoms, functionality, complications) where the patient is given a score of 1 to 4 in each area. A score of one means that things got worse and a score of 4 means that symptoms resolved or there are no functional limitations or complications. The scores are added together to create a single score between 4-16, with a low score meaning a poor outcome and a high score meaning a good outcome. It took some time, but it seems like the CCOS is starting to catch on with other researchers. The scale has been cited over 40 times in other publications and in just the last few months, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of studies which use the CCOS. While it may not be perfect, the more researchers use it, the more valuable it will become as it will provide a basis for comparison between studies. As such, the CCOS shows promise as an important step forward in Chiari research.