

Using OASIS Items in Assessment and Care Planning –

Because most OASIS items describe patient health and functional status, they are useful in assessing the care needs of adult patients. HHAs will find it necessary to supplement the OASIS items in order to comprehensively assess the health status and care needs of their patients (for example, the OASIS does not include vital signs which are typically included in patient assessments).

Clinicians have remarked that their first impression is that the OASIS data set appears lengthy. However, they later acknowledge that its length is not due to new items in addition to those HHAs currently use in their assessments. Rather, it is due to the greater precision that characterized many of the items and simply requires more detailed descriptions of each response. This precision is necessary to measure outcomes, which is the primary purpose of the data set, but it also contributes to more precise assessment of patient condition. Once clinicians become familiar with the items, they generally find that assessment time does not change significantly because a few new items are added, rather that existing items are replaced with their OASIS counterparts.

The enhanced assessment is also useful in care planning, since it facilitates identifying areas where patient status differs from optimal health or functional status. As more precise assessments lead to improved care planning, they in turn facilitate better care because clinicians can more effectively focus on improving or maintaining current (precisely measured) health status.