

3.6.3.150 Guidelines to Table 15 - Functions of Consciousness

Summary

Table 15 is used to assess functional impairment due to involuntary loss of consciousness or altered state of consciousness.

Altered state of consciousness includes instances where a person may not lose consciousness completely and may remain sitting or standing but becomes unaware of their surroundings or actions.

The diagnosis of the condition must be made by an appropriately qualified medical practitioner. This includes a general practitioner or medical specialists such as a neurologist or endocrinologist.

Act reference: [Social Security \(Tables for the Assessment of Work-related Impairment for Disability Support Pension\) Determination 2011](#) Table 15 - Functions of Consciousness

Determining the level of functional impact

When determining which impairment rating applies to a person the rating that best describes the person's abilities or difficulties must be applied. In applying the descriptors, each descriptor sets out how the points within it are to apply.

Under the 5, 10, 20 and 30 point descriptors in Table 15, the person must have either episodes of involuntary loss of consciousness or altered state of consciousness. Under the 20 point descriptor either (1)(a)(i) or (ii) must apply and the corresponding (A) and (B) points must also both apply. The person must also meet (b), (c) and (d).

Determination of the descriptor that best fits the person's impairment level must be based on the available medical evidence including the person's medical history, investigation results and clinical findings. A person's self-reported symptoms must not solely be relied on. It would be inappropriate to apply an impairment rating based solely on a person's self-reported functional history if this level of functional impairment is not consistent with the medical evidence available.

Act reference: [Social Security \(Tables for the Assessment of Work-related Impairment for Disability Support Pension\) Determination 2011](#) Table 15 - Functions of Consciousness

Some conditions causing impairment commonly assessed using Table 15

These include but are not limited to:

Guidelines to the Tables effective from 1 January 2012

- epilepsy,
- migraine that results in loss of consciousness or altered states of consciousness,
- poorly controlled diabetes mellitus that results in loss of consciousness or altered states of consciousness,
- transient ischaemic attacks.

Example 1: *A 27 year old woman has been diagnosed with epilepsy. She has undergone treatment for this condition and her treating practitioner has outlined that her condition is now stabilised. She continues to experience seizures as a result of this condition, during which she loses consciousness. These seizures occur roughly 6 times per year. Following a seizure she suffers extreme tiredness and headaches and is often unable to undertake her usual activities for a few days. In the past she has required hospitalisation as a result of a seizure. Between these seizures she is able to perform her regular daily activities but she is unable to obtain a driver's licence given the unpredictability of these seizures. She works part-time as a result of this condition and her employer makes allowances for her work absences when she has suffered a seizure. She is unable to work in a role where she could be at increased risk if she had a seizure, such as using machinery.*

The condition is considered fully diagnosed, treated and stabilised and under Table 15, this woman would receive an impairment rating of 10 points given the moderate impact this condition has on her ability to function. Under the 10 point descriptor this woman would meet (1)(a)(i)(A) and (B) and (b), (c) and (d).

Example 2: *A 40 year old woman was diagnosed with vestibular migraine in 2008. She has been examined by a neurologist in the past and takes medications on a daily basis to manage her symptoms. The medical evidence reports that this woman suffers from persistent vertigo with vomiting, lethargy, weight loss, decreased hearing, double vision, poor endurance, decreased concentration, memory and difficulties with problem solving. She has a history of falls due to the condition and experiences blackouts (involuntary loss of consciousness) 2-3 times each month, which have resulted in fractures to her hands and knees. She needs daily support to complete most activities of daily living and cannot obtain a driver's license due to her symptoms.*

The condition is considered fully diagnosed, treated and stabilised and under Table 15 this woman would receive an impairment rating of 20 points given the severe impact this condition has on her ability to function. Under the 20 point descriptor the woman would meet (1)(i)(A) and (B) and (b), (c) and (d).

Act reference: [Social Security \(Tables for the Assessment of Work-related Impairment for Disability Support Pension\) Determination 2011](#) Table 15 - Functions of Consciousness