

Dr. Alice Villalobos, the veterinarian who started Pawspice, a quality of life program for terminal pets, has published a scoring system for life quality called The HHHHHMM scale. The letters stand for: Hurt, Hunger, Hydration, Hygiene, Happiness, Mobility, and More Good Days than Bad.

Quality of Life Scale: The HHHHHMM Scale	
Pet caregivers can use this Quality of Life Scale to determine the success of pawspice care. Score patients using a scale of 1 to 10.	
Score	Criterion
1-10	HURT - Adequate pain control, including breathing ability, is first and foremost on the scale. Is the pet's pain successfully managed? Is he/she running/playing as often and vigorously as usual? Does he/she pant or groom excessively? (often signs of pain)
1-10	HUNGER - Is the pet eating enough? Is the pet willing to eat his/her normal dog food, or is only enticed to eat "treats" or "junk food?" Does hand feeding help?
1-10	HYDRATION - Is the patient dehydrated? If you pull up a small "tent" of skin on the pet's head, does it snap back into place as yours does? If you push a finger onto the pet's gums, does it return to normal pink color in less than 1.5 seconds?
1-10	HYGIENE - What does the pet's coat look like? Does he/she have the same luster and shine to the coat that was present as a younger animal?
1-10	HAPPINESS - Does the pet express joy and interest? Is the pet responsive to things around him or her (family, toys, etc.)? Is the pet depressed, lonely, anxious, bored or afraid?
1-10	MOBILITY - Can the patient get up without assistance? Does the pet need human or mechanical help (e.g., difficulty rising on a tile floor)? Does the pet feel like going for a walk? Is the pet having seizures or stumbling?
1-10	MORE GOOD DAYS THAN BAD - When bad days outnumber good days, quality of life might be compromised. When a healthy human-animal bond is no longer possible, the caregiver must be made aware the end is near. The decision needs to be made if the pet is suffering. If death comes peacefully and painlessly, that is okay.
*TOTAL	*A total over 35 points represents acceptable life quality

Adapted by Villalobos, A.E., Quality of Life Scale Helps Make Final Call, VPN, 09/2004, for Canine and Feline Geriatric Oncology Honoring the Human-Animal Bond, by Blackwell Publishing, Table 10.1, released 2006.