The role of screening tools in diagnosing neuropathic pain.

Neuropathic pain affects 6-8% of the general adult population. It is reported by 27% of chronic pain patients and 40% of cancer patients, yet there is no standardized diagnostic test for neuropathic pain. A number of screening tools have been developed based on verbal pain descriptors, with or without limited clinical examination, to identify individuals with neuropathic pain. Over the past decade these neuropathic pain screening tools have been validated in a wide range of pain populations, as well as translated into many languages, to discriminate between neuropathic and non-neuropathic pain. We describe here the five most commonly used neuropathic pain screening tools and discuss current assessment guidelines, the use of screening tools in novel clinical contexts and their potential use in personalized therapy.