

**Appendix 1:** MRC (Medical Research Council) scores of muscle weakness over time. MRC scores of muscle strength were quantified bilaterally in arms and legs. The figure shows examples of different proximal and distal movements of the limbs and MRC sum score. Note that the majority of patients could not reliably be evaluated due to analgosedation (2 patients with RASS < -1 in the second week, RASS = Richmond Agitation Sedation Scale) and mechanical ventilation (78% of patients (n=25) in the first week and 50% (n=9) in the second week), so that muscle strength in only 7 patients in the first week and 10 patients in the second week could be evaluated. In the patients examined after 4 months a considerable improvement of muscle strength could be found, but muscle weakness was still detectable. Muscle weakness always was symmetrical and affected both proximal and distal muscle groups.