Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) and Z-codes

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• Jean Acevedo, faculty for this educational event, has no relevant financial relationship(s) with ineligible companies to disclose.

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SPECIAL NOTE: Attendees should rely on information from the 2022 ICD-10-CM data and other forthcoming guidance from CMS, as well as current code books before implementing any of the material discussed here.
Learning Outcomes

• Upon completing this session, participants will understand:
  1. ICD-10
  2. Social Determinants of Health Defined
  3. Reporting SDoH ICD-10-CM Codes
  4. Impact on Office Visit Coding

ICD-10: A Refresher

ICD-10-CM Basics

• Report the condition mainly responsible for the palliative care encounter as the primary ICD-10-CM code
• Be as specific as possible
  • Up to 7 digits
  • Avoid “unspecified” codes if at all possible
• Do not continue to support a condition that has no s/s and is not receiving treatment
  • Z65.3: Personal history of malignant neoplasm of breast
ICD-10-CM Basics

- Do not report the signs/symptoms when the condition has been confirmed
  - Exception!
- Z51.5: Encounter for Palliative Care
  - Statistical data collection
  - Helps to support why the palliative care provider is seeing the patient for heart failure as is the cardiologist

Neoplasm Coding and Sequencing of Complications

When an encounter is for management of a complication associated with a neoplasm, and the treatment is only for the complication, the complication is coded first, followed by the appropriate code(s) for the neoplasm. For example, dehydration is sequenced first, followed by the code(s) for the malignancy when the encounter is for the management of dehydration due to the malignancy and only the dehydration is being treated.

The appropriate code for the malignancy is sequenced as the principal diagnosis followed by the appropriate code for the anemia such as code D63.0 (Anemia in neoplastic disease), when the encounter is for management of an anemia associated with the malignancy and the treatment is only for anemia.

Regardless of the number of admissions or encounters for treatment and care of the neoplasm, symptoms, signs and ill-defined conditions listed in Chapter 18 that are characteristic of, or associated with, an existing primary or secondary site malignancy cannot be used to replace the malignancy as principal or first-listed diagnosis.

Encounter for Pain Control/Management

When pain is documented as being related, associated or due to cancer, primary or secondary malignancy, or tumor code G99.3 (Neoplasm related pain, acute/chronic) would be assigned regardless of whether the pain is acute or chronic.

This code may be assigned as the principal or first-listed code. When the documented reason for the encounter is pain control/pain management, assign G99.3 as the principal code. The underlying neoplasm should be reported as an additional diagnosis. This is an exception to the rule to not code the signs and symptoms when there is a confirmed diagnosis.

Code G99.3 may be assigned as an additional diagnosis when the reason for the encounter is management of the neoplasm and documentation also notes pain associated with the neoplasm. It is not necessary to assign an additional code for the site of the pain.
Social Determinantes of Health Defined

Social Determinantes of Health: An interesting subset of ICD-10-CM

- What are social determinants of health (SDoH)
- Social determinants of health are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.
- "life enhancing resources, such as food supply, housing, economic and social relationships, transportation, education, and health care whose distribution across populations effectively determines length and quality of life."

Increasing Focus on SDoH

- Increase in value-based purchasing and at-risk payment models have contributed to a greater interest in improving the health of populations being managed.
- SDoH have been shown to have a greater impact on patients' health outcomes than either the actual care provided or the genetic factors.
- Payers have begun to direct attention towards SDoH to improve healthcare outcomes and reduce costs.
- SDoH concepts are increasingly being used in risk adjustment models to more equitably assess patient outcomes.
SDoH – Top 5 Reported ICD-10 Codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Z59.0</td>
<td>Homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z60.2</td>
<td>Problems related to living alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z63.0</td>
<td>Problems in relationship with spouse or partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z63.4</td>
<td>Disappearance and death of family member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z65.8</td>
<td>Other specified problems related to psychosocial circumstances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


SDoH and the Coronavirus

• Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, the CDC says
  • “For many people in racial and ethnic minority groups, living conditions may contribute to underlying health conditions and make it difficult to follow steps to prevent getting sick with COVID-19 or to seek treatment if they do get sick.”

SDoH – CDC Statistics

• 1 in 4 adults with advanced chronic kidney disease are food insecure
  • Food insecure without hunger
  • Food insecure with moderate hunger
  • Food insecure with severe hunger.
• Reporting food insecurity
  • Z59.4
• Being cognizant of this state may help target interventions to improve the health of people with CKD.
# CDC Data on COPD

**Indicator Definitions - Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COPD</td>
<td>Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td>Deaths due to COPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitalizations</td>
<td>Hospitalizations for COPD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# CDC Data on Asthma

**Indicator Definitions - Asthma**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>Asthma prevalence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td>Deaths due to asthma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitalizations</td>
<td>Hospitalizations for asthma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# SDoH and Public Health

- CDC state specific data
- Where do they get this information?
ICD-10-CM Guidelines

- SDoH may be coded if self-reported by patients “as long as the patient self-reported information is signed off by and incorporated into the health record by either a clinician or provider.”
- Information for Z55-Z65 – code assignment may be based on medical record documentation from clinicians involved in the care of the patient who are not the patient’s provider since this information represents social information, rather than medical diagnosis.
- SDoH report potential health hazards related to socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances that may complicate the care of the patient.

ICD-10-CM and SDoH: An Interesting Subset

- Social Determinants of Health
  - Z57.2 – Occupational exposure to dust
  - Z59.0 – Homelessness
  - Z59.4 – Lack of adequate food and safe drinking water
  - Z59.6 – Low income
  - Z91.120 - Patient’s intentional under dosing of medication regimen due to financial hardship

www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/index.htm
Z55-Z65 Guidelines

- Only report as secondary diagnoses
- Some of the only codes allowed to be reported based on documentation from clinicians involved in the care of the patient who are not the patient’s provider.
  - Social information rather than medical diagnoses

Adopting Internal Guidelines

- What documentation would justify the assignment of an SDoH-related code?
  - “Tent city” resident or “Lives in vehicle” would justify reporting Z59.0/homelessness
  - “Patient furloughed, underemployed,” “reports reduction in work hours” supports Z56.6/other physical and mental strain related to work.
- Require SDoH-related ICD-10 codes be reported in the 1st four diagnosis field to ensure they are captured by the payer.

Reasons for Reporting SDoH

- American Academy of Pediatrics’ Bright Futures Guidelines
  - Prioritizes SDoH at the very top of Health Supervision visits at ever age, outlining the specific items that are most important at each stage of life.
  - For adolescents, poverty correlates with high rates of
    - Infant mortality
    - Developmental delays
    - Asthma
    - Ear infections
    - Obesity
    - Child abuse and neglect

If you knew the child lived in poverty, might you look closer for signs of asthma, otitis media?
Or even as a reason or contributing factor for delayed speech?
Reasons for Reporting SDoH

- Reporting these codes can better paint a picture of the patient to the plan of the complexity of the patient population you serve
  - Showing the complexity helps to support why this patient may need to be seen at a higher frequency than others (based on the primary dx).
  - May show why you appear “more expensive” from a cost and quality perspective
    - To the plan
    - To your ACO or other shared savings program
  - Basic public health data

SDoH and Office/Clinic Visits

- A measure of “complexity” in determining office visit CPT® codes (99202-99205, 99212-99215) starting 2021 is “social determinants of health.”
  - When the SDoH significantly limits a patient’s diagnosis or treatment
    - Moderate risk in the Patient Management element

SDoH and 99202-99215

- Level based on complexity of MDM
  - 2.3 Elements must be met or exceeded for the level chosen
    1. Number/Complexity of the Problems Addressed
    2. Amount and/or Complexity of Data to be Reviewed and Analyzed
    3. Risk of Complications and/or Morbidity or Mortality of Patient Management
Element #1

![Table: Number/Complexity of Problems Addressed]

- **High**
  - 1+ Chronic illnesses w/ severe exacerbation, progression, or side effects of treatment
  - 1+ Acute or chronic illness or injury that poses a threat to life or bodily function

- **Moderate**
  - 1 Chronic illness w/ exacerbation, progression, or side effects of treatment
  - 2+ Stable chronic illnesses
  - 1 Undiagnosed new problem w/ uncertain prognosis
  - 1 Acute illness w/ systemic symptoms
  - 1 Acute complicated injury

- **Low**
  - 2+ Self-limited or minor problems
  - 1 Stable chronic illness
  - 1 Acute uncomplicated illness or injury

- **Minimal**
  - 1 Self-limited or minor problem

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Element #3

![Table: Risk of Complications and/or Mortality or Morbidity of Patient Management]

- **High**
  - High risk of morbidity from additional diagnostic testing or treatment
  - Drug therapy requiring intensive monitoring for toxicity
  - Decision regarding elective major surgery w/ identified patient or procedure risk factors
  - Decision regarding emergency major surgery
  - Decision regarding hospitalization

- **Moderate**
  - Moderate risk of morbidity from additional diagnostic testing or treatment
  - Prescription drug management
  - Decision regarding minor surgery with identified patient or procedure risk factors
  - Decision regarding elective major surgery without identified patient or procedure
  - Diagnosis or treatment significantly limited by social determinants of health

- **Low**
  - Low risk of morbidity from additional diagnostic testing or treatment
  - Limited risk of mortality from additional diagnostic testing or treatment

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Final Words on SDoH

- Substandard housing such as water leaks, poor ventilation, dirty carpets and pest infestation can lead to an increase in mold, mites and other allergens associated with poor health.
- Homeowners who are behind in their mortgage payments are also more likely to lack a sufficient supply of food and to go without prescribed medications, compared to those who do not fall behind on payments. (HealthAffairs.org)
- Not being able to afford treatment, follow instructions, etc. may assist in E/M coding. Reporting these factors provides important information on the scope of the problem for all of us.
References

- NHPCO’s Palliative Care Playbook
  - [https://www.nhpco.org/palliativecare/palliative-care-playbook/](https://www.nhpco.org/palliativecare/palliative-care-playbook/)
- ICD-10 Online Resource
  - [ICD10data.com](http://ICD10data.com)

Thank You!

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