ICD-10-CM: Seventh Characters - A, D, S - Initial, Subsequent, Sequela

May 18, 2015
Vol. 12

ICD-10-CM uses seventh characters in some codes to provide additional information. We're going to look at Chapter 19 of ICD-10-CM which covers injuries, poisonings, and certain other consequences of external causes; code range S00-T88. We are concentrating on 7th characters A, S, and D.

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I., A., 5, 7th Characters

Certain ICD-10-CM categories have applicable 7th characters. The applicable 7th character is required for all codes within the category, or as the notes in the Tabular List instruct. The 7th character must always be the 7th character in the data field. If a code that requires a 7th character is not 6 characters, a placeholder X must be used to fill in the empty characters.

I., C., 19, a. Application of 7th Characters in Chapter 19

Most categories in chapter 19 have a 7th character requirement for each applicable code. Most categories in this chapter have three 7th character values (with the exception of fractures): **A**, initial encounter, **D**, subsequent encounter and S, sequela. Categories for traumatic fractures have additional 7th character values. While the patient may be seen by a new or different provider over the course of treatment for an injury, assignment of the 7th character is based on whether the patient is undergoing active treatment and not whether the provider is seeing the patient for the first time.

7th character "A"

7th character **"A"**, initial encounter is used while the patient is receiving active treatment for the condition. Examples of active treatment are: surgical treatment, emergency department encounter, and evaluation and continuing treatment by the same or a different physician.

Example: Patient is injured while chopping wood for his cottage. The ax slipped and the patient's left forearm was deeply lacerated. Patient was stabilized at Community Hospital then transferred to University Hospital for definitive care.

<u>Both</u> hospitals would use the following code:

- **S51.812A** Laceration without foreign body of left forearm, initial encounter

Rationale: There was active treatment at both facilities.

7th character "D"

7th character "D" subsequent encounter is used for encounters after the patient has received active treatment of the condition and is receiving routine care for the condition during the healing or recovery phase. Examples of subsequent care are: cast change or removal, an x-ray to check healing status of fracture, removal of external or internal fixation device, medication adjustment, other aftercare and follow up visits following treatment of the injury or condition.

Example: The same patient as above has been discharged from the hospital and is now presenting to the Wound Care Clinic for a bandage change.

Wound care Clinic would use the following code:

- **S51.812D** Laceration without foreign body of left forearm, subsequent encounter

Rationale: Active treatment has ended and routine care has begun.

7th character "S"

7th character **"S"**, sequela, is for use for complications or conditions that arise as a direct result of a condition, such as scar formation after a burn. The scars are sequelae of the burn. When using 7th character "S", it is necessary to use both the injury code that precipitated the sequela and the code for the sequela itself. The "S" is added only to the injury code, not the sequela code. The 7th character "S" identifies the injury responsible for the sequela. The specific type of sequela (e.g. scar) is sequenced first, followed by the injury code.

Example: The same patient now presents for scar revision of the left forearm at Community Hospital.

Community Hospital would use the following codes:

- **L90.5** Scar conditions and fibrosis of skin
- **S51.812S** Laceration without foreign body of left forearm, sequela

Rationale: The scar being treated is a result of the initial laceration.

Coding Practice Example: Patient presents with right clawhand due to accident 6 months ago. The patient transected the ulnar nerve at the wrist level when he broke a window with his right fist.

Code injury codes only:

"Patient presents with right clawhand." Reminder: This is the sequela of the initial injury

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ICD-10-CM Index
Clawhand (acquired)—see also Deformity, limb, clawhand
Deformity Q89.9
- limb (acquired) M21.90
- - clawfoot M21.53-
- - clawhand **M21.51-** ⬅

ICD-10-CM Tabular
M21.5 Acquired clawhand, clubhand, clawfoot and clubfoot
> **M21.51 Acquired clawhand**
> ➡ **M21.511 Acquired clawhand, right hand**

"… due to accident 6 months ago. The patient transected the ulnar nerve at the wrist level… "

ICD-10-CM Index
Laceration
- nerve —see Injury, nerve
Injury (see also specified injury type) T14.90
- nerve NEC T14.8
- - ulnar (forearm level) S54.0-
- - - arm (upper) (level) S44.0-
- - - hand (level) **S64.0-** ⬅
- - - wrist (level) —see Injury, nerve, ulnar, hand

ICD-10-CM Tabular
S64 Injury of nerves at wrist and hand level
> **S64.0 Injury of ulnar nerve at wrist and hand level**
> ➡ **S64.01** Injury of ulnar nerve at wrist and hand level of right arm

The appropriate 7th character is to be added to each code from category S64
A - initial encounter
D - subsequent encounter
S – sequela

Transected the right ulnar nerve at the wrist level **S64.01xS**

Final codes:

Patient presents with right clawhand due to accident 6 months ago. The patient transected the ulnar nerve at the wrist level when he broke a window with his right fist.

- Right clawhand M21.511
- Transected the right ulnar nerve at the wrist level S64.01xS

What about Long Term Care after an injury?

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I., C., 21., c., 7 Aftercare

The aftercare Z codes should also not be used for aftercare for injuries. For aftercare of an injury, assign the acute injury code with the appropriate 7th character (for subsequent encounter)

- Please see AHA Coding Clinic for ICD-9-CM 4th Q 2012 pp 90-99 for further advice on coding for Long Term Care.

Coding Practice Example: An elderly female fell at home and suffered a closed, displaced, transverse fracture of the left femoral shaft. An ORIF was performed at Community Hospital and the patient is now being admitted to Long Term Care for fracture healing, strengthening, and physical therapy.

ICD-10-CM Index
Fracture, traumatic (abduction) (adduction) (separation) (see also Fracture, pathological) T14.8
- femur, femoral S72.9-
- - shaft (lower third) (middle third) (upper third) S72.30-
- - - transverse (displaced) **S72.32-** ⬅

ICD-10-CM Tabular
S72.3 Fracture of shaft of femur
> **S72.32 Transverse fracture of shaft of femur**
> ➡ **S72.322** Displaced transverse fracture of shaft of **left** femur

The appropriate 7th character is to be added to each code from category S72. (There are 16 choices, but we will narrow them to:)
A - initial encounter for closed fracture
D - subsequent encounter for closed fracture with routine healing
S – sequela

Closed, displaced, transverse fracture of the left femoral shaft, subsequent encounter for closed fracture with routine healing **S72.322D**

Final code: **S72.322D** Closed, displaced, transverse fracture of the left femoral shaft, subsequent encounter for closed fracture with routine healing

Note: The coder must be guided by documentation in the medical record of each individual case to make the correct code selections.