Chronic Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in ICD-10-CM

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a type of obstructive lung disease characterized by chronically poor airflow.

The main symptoms include shortness of breath, cough and sputum. Tobacco smoking is the most common cause of COPD, with a number of other factors such as air pollution and genetics playing a smaller role.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) may be found in the ICD-10-CM Index under:
- Main term - Disease
- Sub term - Pulmonary or Sub term - Lung

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) may be reported as:

- chronic obstructive (unspecific) J44.9
- with acute bronchitis J44.0
- with exacerbation (acute) J44.1
- with lower respiratory infection (acute) J44.0
- decompensated J44.1
- with exacerbation (acute) J44.1

Confusingly, in ICD-10-CM, if patient has COPD with acute exacerbation J44.1 and acute bronchitis J44.0 – three codes would be required;
- One for the COPD with acute exacerbation,
- One for the COPD with acute bronchitis,
- And a code for the acute bronchitis, J20.9

Rationale for three codes:
- Both codes J44.0 and J20.9 are necessary to correctly code the acute bronchitis with COPD.
  - Under code J44.0 there is a note: “Use additional code to identify the infection.”
  - J20.9 is used to identify the infection, acute
  - Code J44.1 is not added as an additional code to identify the COPD exacerbation.

Exercises

**Exercise 1:** Patient admitted to the hospital with Exacerbation of COPD with Acute Bronchitis

Step 1: Locate each term in the Alphabetic Index:

- Main term: Disease, disease
- Main term: Lung
- Main term: Obstructive (chronic) J44.9
- Main term: Acute bronchitis J44.0
- Main term: Exacerbation NEC J44.1

Step 2: Verify the code selected in the Tabular List:

- J44.0 Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease with acute lower respiratory infection
- Use additional code to identify the infection J20.9: Acute bronchitis, unspecified
- Excludes 2: acute bronchitis with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease J44.4
- J44.1 Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease with (acute) exacerbation
- Excludes 2: chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) with acute bronchitis J44.0

Excludes notes (reminder):

ICD-10-CM has two types of excludes notes. Each note has a different definition for use but they are both similar in that they indicate that codes excluded from each other are independent of each other.

- A type 1 Excludes note is a pure excludes note. It means “Not Coded Here!” An Excludes note indicates that the code excluded should never be used at the same time as the code above the Excludes note. An Excludes 1 is used when two conditions cannot occur together, such as a congenital form versus an acquired form of the same condition.
- A type 2 Excludes note represents, “Not included here.” An Excludes 2 note indicates that the condition excluded is not part of the condition represented by the code, but a patient may have both conditions at the same time. When an Excludes 2 noted appears under a code, it is acceptable to use both the code and the excluded code together, when appropriate.

**Exercise 2:** Patient admitted with COPD with asthma

Step 1: Locate each term in the Alphabetic Index:

- Main term: Disease, disease
- Main term: Lung
- Main term: Obstructive (chronic) J44.9

In ICD-10-CM in the Tabular, one of the notes under category J44 states:
- Code also type of asthma, if applicable (J45.9)

Step 2: Verify the code selected in the Tabular List:

- J44.9 Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, unspecified
- J45.909 Unspecified asthma, uncomplicated

**Exercise 3:** Patient admitted to the hospital with moderate persistent asthma in acute exacerbation with acute exacerbation of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Step 1: Locate each term in the Alphabetic Index:

- Main term: Disease, disease
- Main term: Lung
- Main term: Obstructive (chronic) J44.9
- Main term: Acute bronchitis J44.0
- Main term: Exacerbation NEC J44.1

Step 2: Verify the code selected in the Tabular List:

- J44.1 Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease with (acute) exacerbation
- Excludes 2: chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) with acute bronchitis J44.4
- J45.41 Moderate persistent asthma with (acute) exacerbation
- J45.909 Unspecified asthma, uncomplicated
- J45.40 Persistent moderate with exacerbation (acute)
- J45.32 Status asthmaticus

**Remainder the ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting:**

Use both the Alphabetic Index and the Tabular List when locating and assigning a code. Reliance on only the Alphabetic Index or the Tabular List leads to errors in code assignments and less specificity in the code selection.

Locate the term in the Alphabetic Index and verify the code selected in the Tabular List.

Read and be guided by instructional notations that appear in both the Alphabetic Index and the Tabular List.

**Final Note:** Please use the documentation provided in the medical record as well as the index and tabular in the ICD-10-CM code book to guide your code choice.