ICD-10

The ICD-10 value-add for chronic disease and better care

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We have a problem! Yes, chronic diseases are having a massive effect on our health care system and our society as a whole. According to the July 17, 2014 testimony provided to the Senate Finance Committee, the problems posed by chronic disease care accounts for **93 percent of all Medicare spending**. The 93% figure really cannot be ignored. The ICD-10-CM code set can be a part of the multi-faceted solution.

Chronic diseases have also gained bi-partisan support in Washington DC, with the *Better Care, Lower Cost Act of 2014*, introduced this past January by Democratic and Republican sponsors in the House and Senate, which offers an innovative path for the future of Medicare. The above two political actions are surely a message to implement ICD-10-CM soon, because without information and the specific clinical data that ICD-10-CM provides, we will not be able to achieve better care and ultimately lower costs in health care. Let us take this even further with a closer look at chronic diseases and the ICD-10 linkage.

You may ask: What are chronic diseases? The Center for Disease Control (CDC) offers the following information and facts:

Chronic diseases are non-communicable illnesses that are prolonged in duration, do not resolve spontaneously, and are rarely cured completely. Examples of chronic diseases include heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and arthritis.

- *Chronic diseases cause 7 in 10 deaths each year in the United States.*
- *About 133 million Americans—nearly 1 in 2 adults—live with at least one chronic illness.*
- *More than 75% of health care costs are due to chronic conditions.*
- *Approximately one-fourth of persons living with a chronic illness experience significant limitations in daily activities.*
- *The percentage of U.S. children and adolescents with a chronic health condition has increased from 1.8% in the 1960s to more than 7% in 2004.*

In addition, the CDC shares these shocking figures about the health (or lack of health) of our citizenry:

- **Cancer**, the second leading cause of death, claims more than half a million lives each year.

- **Diabetes** is the leading cause of kidney failure, non-traumatic lower extremity amputations, and new cases of blindness each year among U.S. adults aged 20–74 years.

- **Arthritis**, the most common cause of disability, limits activity for 19 million U.S. adults.

- **Obesity** has become a major health concern for people of all ages. One in every three adults and nearly one in every five young people aged 6–19 are obese.

The ICD-10 code set is the critical classification system partner for chronic disease data capture. When taking a closer look at chronic conditions, e.g., Alzheimer's, diabetes, neoplasms (cancer) and obesity, we can see how ICD-10 provides detail, specificity and enhancements to the clinical data that is missing today. Keep in mind that some aspects of a disease are very complex, thus, the code set may be capturing that complexity through the necessary medical record documentation.

Alzheimer's
Within ICD-10-CM the documentation and coding of Alzheimer's disease will now be able to capture and identify the type and onset of a disease through the codes. This includes whether the disease has **early or late onset**. The type and symptoms will now be captured through documentation of any delirium and dementia with or without behavioral disturbances. Capture of these components of the disease can help improve patient care, research, disease prevention and cure(s).

Some facts from the Alzheimer's Association, 2014 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures, *Alzheimer's & Dementia,* Volume 10, Issue 2 include:

- An estimated 5.2 million Americans of all ages will have Alzheimer's disease in 2014. This includes an estimated five million people age 65 and older, and approximately 200,000 individuals under age 65 who have younger-onset Alzheimer's.

- One in nine people age 65 and older (11 percent) has Alzheimer's disease.

- By 2025, the number of people age 65 and older with Alzheimer's disease is estimated to reach 7.1 million.

- Almost 2/3 of Alzheimer's sufferers are women.

These figures are crying out for chronic disease management within our health care system**.** Maintaining the status quo with our current coding classification system is simply out of the question AND not the answer for the clinical data we need; however, ICD-10 offers big data to help.

Diabetes
Documentation and coding of diabetes in ICD-10-CM has new and improved guidelines and code options to enhance the capture of disease data. Capturing the type of diabetes, the body system affected and the complication or manifestations affecting each body system are critical data elements to understand this chronic condition better. Because of the systemic nature of diabetes capturing the body system affected, ICD-10 will provide the clinical information to achieve better care.

The body system affected and complications include:

- Circulatory
- Renal/Kid

- Neurologic
- Ophthalmic\
- Hyperosmolarity
- Other specific complications
- Arthropathy
- Dermatitis
- Hyperglycemia
- Hypoglycemia
- Oral complications
- Skin ulcer

In addition, some diabetes types are "secondary" to drug and chemical agents. Identifying that within the data is now increased with ICD-10, which is a plus. Diabetes is nearing epidemic volumes in the United States, both young and old, thus, having a robust code set will help with tracking and trending these occurrences. The code set can now provide more details on the complexity of this chronic disease.

According to the American Diabetes Association, in 2012, 29.1 million Americans, or 9.3% of the population, had been diagnosed with diabetes. The percentage of Americans age 65 and older remains high, at 25.9%, or 11.8 million seniors (diagnosed and undiagnosed). There is value for this chronic disease from ICD-10 implementation.

Neoplasm
Documentation and ICD-10-CM coding of neoplasms will enhance the ability to capture the specific site of the malignancy and laterality (right, left, and bilateral) for paired organs and the extremities. In addition, coding with ICD-10-CM captures more of the morphology that occurs in the malignancy neoplasms. Data will now be available for several very clinically complex neoplastic conditions also.

Updating the code set to clinical practice was one of the goals of ICD-10-CM. Within the neoplasm chapter there are new categories, reclassification, use of combination codes, information about histologic type and grade, and revised terminology. This is es pecially true in the lymphoma and Hodgkin Disease classification that now contains new terms and descriptions. Another improvement within the neoplasm classification is melanoma of the skin. In ICD-10-CM we are now able to capture the stage and depth of the lesion, which ICD-9-CM cannot. There is also an expansion of the specific site of the melanoma within ICD-10-CM. This coded data will allow for more comprehensive health care data which leads to better care.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) states that *much of the suffering and death from cancer could be prevented by more systematic efforts to reduce tobacco use, improve diet and physical activity, and expand the use of established screening tests.* Here are some ACS statistics:

- Breast cancer is the second most common newly diagnosed cancer and second leading cause of cancer death among women in the U.S.

- Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the third most common newly diagnosed cancer and the third most common cause of cancer death among U.S. men and women.

- African-Americans have the highest death rate and shortest survival of any racial/ethnic group in the U.S. for most cancers

Obesity

Excess weight and actual obesity, in and of themselves, carry health risks and affect other body systems and conditions, e.g., diabetes, respiratory compromise and cardiac disease. Within ICD-10-CM, the classification has been expanded to capture more information about obesity. Obesity will capture the underlying case of "drug-induced" or "due to excess calories." In addition, the ICD-10 code set will also capture the Body Mass Index (BMI) that compares height and weight to the total proportion of body fat, which is an indicator of excess weight and actual obesity.

The CDC provides information on obesity in the United States and in particular that on childhood obesity.

- Childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years.

- In 2012, more than one-third of children and adolescents were overweight or obese.

- Obese adolescents are more likely to have pre-diabetes, a condition in which blood glucose levels indicate a high risk for development of diabetes.

- Children and adolescents who are obese are at greater risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems, such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem.

The focus of public health efforts on obesity, and surveillance of trends in obesity remains important, especially for childhood obesity. ICD-10-CM provides better data that supports better health care and chronic disease management.

Summary

Chronic diseases affect young, middle-aged and the old, so we are all affected. We most likely know someone or know of someone with a chronic disease, if not those mentioned above, then other conditions. Chronic diseases are far-reaching and go deep into our public health structure. Evaluation, treatment, prevention and cures are all tied into the clinical data of these chronic diseases. Without argument, that, in and of itself, justifies the value of having implementing ICD-10 in 2015.

In order to have the best public health surveillance data available across all aspects of our health care system; in national, state, tribal, and local public health sources, we need to adopt ICD-10 in 2015. We can NOT delay ICD-10 any further, if just for the sake of chronic disease sufferers and for public health surveillance alone. We each need to take some ownership to improve our health care system with better data across the U.S. and that comes from having ICD-10 implemented.

Better care is the calling card for the ICD- 10 code set that is a value-add to our health care system. Everyone in and out of the health care system needs to advocate strongly for ICD-10 support to better care of our nation's citizens. Chronic diseases are real, the value of the ICD-10 code set is real, and therefore, 2015 is the opportunity to make a big difference.

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