

Per AHA's Coding Clinic and the ICD-10-CM Coding Manual, assumed causal relationships exist between diabetes and several associated complications.

Diabetic Complications with Cause-and-Effect Linkage

- Diabetic patients frequently encounter complications affecting the eyes, feet, kidneys, nervous system, and circulatory system. These issues can arise at any stage of diabetes. Patients may experience multiple diabetic complications across various body areas or systems.
- ICD-10-CM assumes a cause-and-effect relationship between diabetes and certain conditions listed as subterms under "Diabetes, with" in the alphabetic index. These conditions are coded as diabetic complications, even without explicit documentation linking them, unless the documentation clearly states:
 - The actual non-diabetic-related cause
 - The cause is not diabetes
 - Diabetes is without complications
 - The cause is unknown

Diabetes with Other Complications

- Documentation must link the relationship between diabetes and the other specific diagnosis
 - E.g., hypertension, obesity, other renal complications (proteinuria or microalbuminuria)

Resolved Diabetes and Associated Conditions or Complications

- DM 2 can resolve in a patient who continues to have diabetic complications
- Documentation must link the resolved DM 2 to its manifestation(s)

Insulin

- Documentation must include current long-term or temporary use

Diabetes with Hyperglycemia

- A diabetic patient's blood glucose level and/or hemoglobin A1C levels are too high
- Hyperglycemia alternative documentation examples
 - Out of control, poorly controlled, high blood sugar, high A1c
- Documentation for current hyperglycemia should include an amendment to the treatment plan
 - E.g., noncompliance, continued use of medication, schedule A1c labs

Diabetes with Hypoglycemia

- A diabetic patient's blood glucose level is too low due to too much insulin in the blood
 - E.g., taking too much insulin, skipping meals, or extreme exercise
- Hypoglycemia alternative documentation example
 - Low blood sugar
- Documentation should include an amendment to the treatment plan

Uncontrolled diabetes is subjective for either hyperglycemia or hypoglycemia, depending on documentation of the current assessment and/or treatment of high/low blood sugar or A1c levels.

For questions or more information, please contact:

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