

Medicare Risk Adjustment Coding Focus

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder is a disorder of the brain that causes extreme mood swings plus changes in activity and energy levels which can severely affect a person's ability to perform every day activities.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), bipolar disorder affects over 6 million adults in America. Also known as manic-depressive illness, bipolar disorder is a lifelong illness that can be managed with long-term, continuous treatment.

Symptoms and Types

A person suffering from bipolar disorder will experience periods of both manic and depressive episodes. Manic periods may include feelings of euphoria and having increased energy, rapid thoughts, talking too fast or being easily agitated or overly sensitive. Depressive episodes may include feelings of hopelessness and sadness, decreased energy, feeling empty or worried, an inability to sleep or thoughts of suicide or death.

There are different types of bipolar disorder, which are categorized by the severity and length of manic and depressive symptoms. The two main types are:

- Bipolar I: manic episodes last at least 7 days, and depressive episodes last two weeks or more and/or symptoms are severe enough to require hospitalization
- Bipolar II: depressive and hypomanic episodes, but not as severe as Bipolar I

Bipolar disorder can also be present even if the symptoms are not as extreme, such as an episode of hypomania. An individual experiencing hypomania may feel really good and be very productive, not realizing that anything is wrong. However, if left untreated, hypomania may develop into severe depression or mania.

Causes and Treatment

There is no single definitive cause of bipolar disorder, but rather it is thought to be the result of multiple factors. Genetics, family history and the function and structure of the brain are all believed to be contributing factors to developing the disorder.

Effective treatment for bipolar disorder typically includes medication and psychotherapy. Antidepressants, mood stabilizers or mild antipsychotics may be prescribed and patients may need to try several different types of medication to find one that works best for them.

Coding Guidance

ICD-10-CM code category F31 (HCC 59) offers multiple, distinct diagnosis codes related to bipolar disorder, and specific documentation is required for correct code assignment. There are sub categories which designate if it is a current episode, in remission, bipolar II or unspecified bipolar disorder. Additional details are included to indicate hypomanic, manic or depressed mood, the presence of psychotic features and the severity of the current or most recent episode. The medical record will need to include these details in order to code to the highest level of specificity.

Bipolar Disorder (HCC59)	
F31.0	Hypomanic
F31.1*	Manic, without psychotic features
F31.2	Manic, severe with psychotic features
F31.3*	Depressed, mild or moderate severity
F31.4	Depressed, severe, without psychotic features
F31.5	Depressed, severe, with psychotic features
F31.6*	Mixed
F31.7**	In remission
F31.81	Bipolar II disorder
F31.89	Other bipolar disorder
F31.9	Bipolar, unspecified
._* - requires fifth character to indicate severity	
._** - requires fifth character to indicate full or partial remission, and type of most recent episode	

Resources

- 1 National Alliance on Mental Illness. (n.d.) Mental Health by the Numbers. Retrieved from <https://nami.org>
- 2 National Institute of Mental Health. (2016). Bipolar Disorder. Retrieved from <https://www.nih.gov>
- 3 Mayo Clinic. (n.d.) Bipolar Disorder. Retrieved from <http://mayo.org>
- 4 Schmidt, A., Kenney, A., Krawzik, K., & Willard, P. (2016). ICD-10-CM expert for physicians 2017: The complete official code set. Place of publication not identified: Optum360

Reference the ICD-10-CM Codebook, CMS-HCC Risk Adjustment Model(s) and AHA Coding Clinic for complete code sets and official coding guidance.