

Risk Adjustment Coding Academy- Coding Focus

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)



Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that causes damage to the immune system and lowers the body's ability to fight off infection and disease. As HIV progresses, it can become a life-threatening condition known as Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)¹.

Currently, there are 1.2 million Americans with HIV and of those, 1 in 8 is unaware that they have the virus². HIV has no cure, but there are treatments which help to slow the progression of the disease.

Causes and Symptoms

HIV is transmitted through contact with infected blood or bodily fluids. The most common types of transmission come from sexual contact, blood transfusions and by sharing contaminated needles or syringes. It is not possible to contract HIV from normal, ordinary contact like shaking hands, hugging or kissing.

Symptoms during the initial or acute infection period are similar to those of the flu. Patients may experience fever, body aches, swollen glands and throat pain. Those who believe they may have been exposed to HIV should consult with their physician. HIV is diagnosed by testing blood or saliva for HIV antibodies. However, it can take up to 12 weeks for these antibodies to form in the bloodstream, so a newer test has been developed which screens for HIV

antigen, a protein that is produced by the virus immediately after infection. This test can confirm the diagnosis more quickly, allowing the patient to begin treatment faster.

Once a diagnosis of HIV is confirmed, there are additional tests which will help determine the stage of the disease, such as a CD4 (cluster of differentiation 4) count, viral load and drug resistance test.

AIDS and HIV-2

As HIV progresses, it destroys CD4 cells, which are a specific type of white blood cells that are an important part of the body's immune system. As the CD4 cell count lowers, so does the body's ability to fight off disease. When the CD4 count fails below 200, HIV has progressed into AIDS.

HIV patients can also be diagnosed with AIDS if they have one or more opportunistic infections, as defined by the CDC³, such as:

- Cytomegalovirus
- Encephalopathy
- Kaposi's Sarcoma
- Lymphoma
- Tuberculosis
- Recurrent pneumonia
- Toxoplasmosis of the brain
- Wasting syndrome

HIV-2 is another type of HIV, which has similar characteristics but tends to progress much more slowly and is less likely to cause AIDS. HIV-2 is rarer than HIV and has been found predominately in West Africa⁴.

Coding Guidance

Per FY 2017 Official Coding Guidelines, "Z21, Asymptomatic human immunodeficiency virus [HIV] infection status, is to be applied when the patient

without any documentation of symptoms is listed as being "HIV positive," "known HIV," "HIV test positive" or similar terminology. Do not use this code if the term "AIDS" is used or if the patient is treated for any HIV-related illness or is described as having any condition(s) resulting for his/her HIV positive status; use B20 in these cases." Additional codes are available to indicate exposure (Z20.6) and non-conclusive test results (R75)⁵. Providers should carefully document the current status of the patient for accurate code assignment.

HIV / AIDS (HCC 1)

B20 - Human immunodeficiency virus [HIV] disease

B97.35 - Human immunodeficiency virus, type 2 [HIV 2] as the cause of diseases classified elsewhere

Z21 - Asymptomatic human immunodeficiency virus [HIV] infection status

Resources:

¹ Mayo Clinic (n.d.). Diseases and Conditions: HIV/AIDS. Retrieved December 9, 2016 from mayo.org

² U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (n.d.). HIV/AIDS Basics. Retrieved December 9, 2016 from aids.gov

³ U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (2010, November 16). Opportunistic Infections. Retrieved December 9, 2016 from aids.gov

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011, July 29) HIV-2 Infection Surveillance. Retrieved December 9, 2016 from cdc.gov

⁵ 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°