

Medicare Risk Adjustment Coding Focus

Diabetes mellitus with neurological complications



Diabetes mellitus is a disorder that affects how the body processes and uses sugar. When diabetes is not adequately controlled, it can lead to excess sugar in the blood. Having higher than normal sugar levels can cause damage to major organs, including the heart, lungs, eyes, and kidneys. It can also damage the tiny vessels that supply blood to the nerves, resulting in diabetic neuropathy.¹

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), diabetic neuropathy is the most common diabetic complication, occurring in approximately 50% of all diabetics over the course of their lifetime.²

Types and symptoms

Depending on the nerves or nerve roots involved, diabetes can cause mononeuropathy, polyneuropathy, autonomic neuropathy or amyotrophy. It is possible to have more than one type of neuropathy and the symptoms will vary, depending upon the type.

Peripheral polyneuropathy is the most common type and affects the feet and legs first, followed by the hands and arms. Symptoms include numbness and tingling, sharp pains, increased sensitivity to touch and loss of balance and reflexes.

Autonomic neuropathy can affect major organs such as the heart, stomach, bladder and intestines. There is a wide range of symptoms including bladder and bowel problems, gastroparesis, and difficulty controlling body temperature, trouble swallowing and sexual dysfunctions.

Diabetic amyotrophy, also known as radiculoplexus neuropathy, is more common among type 2 diabetics.

Symptoms typically affect one side of the body and include weakness and shrinking of the thigh muscles, sharp pains in the hip and buttock area and weight loss.

Diabetic mononeuropathy is characterized by damage to a specific nerve. Depending on the affected nerve, symptoms may include pain in the foot, thigh or chest or possibly double vision, trouble focusing and unilateral facial paralysis.

Treatment

There is no cure for diabetic neuropathy. The aim of treatment is slowing the progression of the disease. Treatment includes keeping control of blood sugar levels with routine monitoring and blood tests, as well as relieving pain symptoms with medications and working to restore normal function to affected organs.

Coding guidance

ICD-10-CM chapter four contains combination codes for diabetic complications.³ The code set for neurological complications contains specific details regarding the type of neuropathy. Medical record documentation must include the same level of detail in order to code to the highest level of specificity.

Type 2 diabetes mellitus with neurological complications	
E11.40	Neuropathy, unspecified
E11.41	Mononeuropathy
E11.42	Polyneuropathy
E11.43	Autonomic (poly)neuropathy
E11.44	Amyotrophy
E11.49	Other neurological complication

Resources

- 1 Mayo Clinic website, *Diabetic Neuropathy* (accessed August 2020): <https://www.mayoclinic.org>
- 2 National Institutes of Health (2016): *Updates in Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy* (accessed August 2020): <https://www.nih.gov>
- 3 Optum360° (2019), *ICD-10-CM Expert for Physicians*, The complete official code set.

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