

ICD-10 7th Character Coding Education

One of the significant difference between ICD-9-CM and ICD-10-CM is the need to assign a 7th character, also called a 7th character extension, to code certain categories. The 7th character in ICD-10 is used in certain categories such as Obstetrics, injury, musculoskeletal and external causes. External causes codes are intended to provide data for injury research and evaluation of injury prevention strategies. These codes capture how the injury or health condition happened(cause), the intent (unintentional or accidental; or intentional), the place where the event occurred, the activity of the patient at the time of the event and the person's status.

The coding convention for ICD 10 differs from ICD 9 in that ICD -10 codes are all alphanumeric. The first character is always a letter and the second is always a number, with the remaining characters being either letters or numbers. The first three characters of a code identify the category, and the next three characters identify the sub-category, based on etiology, anatomic site or severity.

The final 7th character is called an extension. It is important to realize that the 7th character, when applicable, is only listed in the tabular list of the code book. Codes that have an applicable 7th category are considered invalid without the 7th character.

The Female Pelvic Medicine specialist is most likely to encounter ICD 10 codes requiring a 7th character with diagnosis within chapter 19 – Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes. This chapter includes conditions such as traumatic injuries to the vagina and pelvis, and complications of genitourinary prosthetic devices, implants, and grafts. In these circumstances, the 7th character must be used to provide data about the nature of the specific encounter. Encounters are characterized by whether the service is for an active problem (e.g. initial encounter), services provided after a problem is resolved (e.g. subsequent encounter) or to treat a condition that arises as a direct result of that condition (e.g. Sequelae)

Initial encounter:

The Initial Encounter is defined as the period when the patient is receiving active treatment for an injury or other consequence of an external cause, and should be assigned to all claims, by all providers while such care is being provided. In other words,

as long as patient is receiving active treatment for the condition, a seventh character is to be reported. That goes for both the first encounter (and regardless as to whether this is a new or established patient) and all subsequent encounters as long as active treatment is taking place. THE SEVENTH CHARACTER DESIGNATED FOR ALL ENCOUNTERS FOR ACTIVE TREATMENT IS THE LETTER "A". It doesn't matter if the encounter is the first or subsequent visit, as long as the diagnosis is being actively managed, the seventh character A is added to the code. This seventh character can be used by any and all treating providers

Subsequent encounter:

This is any encounter after the active phase of treatment and when the patient is receiving routine care for the condition during the healing or recovery phase. This is assigned if the injury is healing properly. THE SEVENTH CHARACTER DESIGNATED FOR THESE ENCOUNTERS IS THE LETTER "D".

Sequela encounter:

This is assigned for complications or conditions that arise as a direct result of the condition. THE SEVENTH CHARACTER DESIGNATED FOR THESE ENCOUNTERS IS THE LETTER "S".

One of the more common set of codes likely used by our sub specialty are the codes designated to describe pelvic floor mesh complications such as erosions. These codes are listed under T83.711 category:

S00-T88 Injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes

- ▶ [T83.59](#) Infection and inflammatory reaction due to prosthetic device, implant and graft in urinary system
 - ▶ [T83.59XA](#) initial encounter
 - ▶ [T83.59XD](#) subsequent encounter
 - ▶ [T83.59XS](#) sequela
- ▶ [T83.6](#) Infection and inflammatory reaction due to prosthetic device, implant and graft in genital tract
 - ▶ [T83.6XXA](#) initial encounter
 - ▶ [T83.6XXD](#) subsequent encounter
 - ▶ [T83.6XXS](#) sequela
- ▶ [T83.7](#) Complications due to implanted mesh and other prosthetic materials

Last Updated by the AUGS Coding and Reimbursement Committee on May 2016

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▶ [T83.71](#) Erosion of implanted mesh and other prosthetic materials to surrounding organ or tissue

▶ [T83.711](#) Erosion of implanted vaginal mesh and other prosthetic materials to surrounding organ or tissue

▶ [T83.711A](#) initial encounter

▶ [T83.711D](#) subsequent encounter

▶ [T83.711S](#) sequela

▶ [T83.718](#) Erosion of other implanted mesh and other prosthetic materials to surrounding organ or tissue

▶ [T83.718A](#) initial encounter

▶ [T83.718D](#) subsequent encounter

▶ [T83.718S](#) sequela

▶ [T83.72](#) Exposure of implanted mesh and other prosthetic materials into surrounding organ or tissue

▶ [T83.721](#) Exposure of implanted vaginal mesh and other prosthetic materials into vagina

▶ [T83.721A](#) initial encounter

Summary:

One significant difference between ICD 9 and ICD-10 is the need to assign a 7th character to certain codes to describe the episode of care. The details captured with the 7th characters were not part of ICD-9 and therefore could be a source of confusion for providers in ICD 10. Some have suggested that the provider consider the diagnosis from the patient's perspective, when trying to understand which 7th character to use. Initial and ongoing treatments are all Initial encounters, follow up during the recovery are subsequent encounters. Sequela are typically the late effects of an injury, such as chronic pain.

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