



Coding Glaucoma

The glaucoma family of codes runs from H40-H42. Laterality is one of the main difference that distinguish ICD-10 from ICD-9. While not all of the glaucoma diagnosis codes require it, many do. Laterality is indicated in the sixth digit.

The other difference between ICD-10 and ICD-9 is the introduction of glaucoma severity staging. Optional at present and coded separately, staging will be mandatory under ICD-10. Stage is denoted in the seventh, or last digit, of the code. Staging is based on a combination of optic nerve condition and visual fields. Like in ICD-9 coding, the choices for staging are 0,1,2,3 and 4.

- 1 mild: No visual field loss on white-on-white standard perimetry, but the optic nerve looks glaucomatous
- 2 moderate: Optic neuropathy consistent with glaucoma, plus visual field loss in one hemifield on, and not within 5 degrees of fixation
- 3 severe: A glaucomatous optic disk plus visual field loss in two hemifields. Alternately, if the visual field loss is limited to one hemifield, it involves the central 5 degrees
- 4 indeterminate: Either the doctor cannot determine the nature of the visual loss, or the patient has not been tested yet, or the patient performed very poorly on the visual field test so the physician cannot rely on the test results to arrive at a diagnosis

The addition of laterality and the requirement of staging means that the number of codes used for glaucoma have increased exponentially.

Some glaucoma diagnostic codes that had single codes under ICD-9 are no longer in the glaucoma-specific codes in ICD-10. Neovascular glaucoma is an example. There is no glaucoma with vascular disorder code (365.63 in ICD-9). Instead, code glaucoma with ocular disorder and add whatever the ocular disorder is such as central retinal vein occlusion or proliferative diabetic retinopathy. Those codes are found in other sections of ICD-10, not in Chapter 7.

Finally, not all codes will have a sixth digit for laterality. An example would be primary open-angle glaucoma – coded as H40.11 – the sixth digit is missing. In this situation, an “x” should be placed in the

sixth digit as a placeholder with the seventh digit used for glaucoma stage. So Open angle glaucoma, mild stage would be H40.10X1.