

Dermatology Coding Alert

Reader Question: Add to Your ICD-10 Know-How

Question: I've heard that ICD-10 doesn't have an equivalent to V codes and E codes, so how can we report external causes and other factors influencing health status under the new code set?

Codify Subscriber

Answer: You've heard right □ ICD-10 doesn't break out the information represented by ICD-9 V and E codes. Instead, ICD-10 incorporates the information into the main classification. That's part of the reason that ICD-10 codes are alphanumeric and contain up to seven characters, compared to ICD-9 codes that contain up to five characters.

The fact that ICD-10 incorporates information for external causes and health status into the main classification has the following implications for the codes:

- Placeholders (X) are required to hold places followed by additional characters
- Seventh characters are required for obstetrics, injuries, and external causes of injuries
- Post-operative complications will now be located with the procedure-specific body system.

Also notice that while ICD-9 classifies injury by type only, ICD-10 classifies injuries first by specific site and then by type.

Helpful: With the extended information provided by a single code under ICD-10, looking back to the parent code to get the whole picture could be difficult. That's why ICD-10 includes full code titles for all codes, so it is not necessary to reference back to common fourth and fifth digit categories.