

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Question: Bury the Myth That Adults Cant Be Juvenile

Question: When I'm choosing the "type" of diabetes, how old does the patient have to be to be considered an adult instead of a juvenile? Does age even matter?

Florida Subscriber

Answer: It's time to bury the myth that age is a factor when determining if a patient has adult or juvenile-onset diabetes.

Insulin-dependent, juvenile-type diabetes, Type I is an autoimmune disease that is typically diagnosed at an early age one of the reasons the term "juvenile" is used, considering most patients are diagnosed with Type I diabetes before they reach the age of 20. But this doesn't mean that patients over the age of 20 can't be diagnosed with Type I diabetes.

Non-insulin-dependent, Type II diabetes is often referred to as "adult-onset" because patients used to take longer to show symptoms of this type of diabetes. But with the increasing prevalence of diabetes in young children, many youths are being diagnosed with Type II diabetes. This form of diabetes can often be controlled with nutrition management, exercise and oral measurements.

Answers to You Be the Coder and Reader Questions were provided by **Kathy Pride, CPC, CCS-P**, HIM applications specialist with QuadraMed, a national healthcare information technology and consulting firm based in San Rafael, Calif.; and **Bruce Rappoport, MD, CPC**, a board-certified internist who works with physicians on compliance, documentation, coding and quality issues for RCH Healthcare Advisors LLC, a Fort Lauderdale, Fla.-based healthcare consulting company.