

Pain Management Coding Alert

Clip & Save: Post These Chronic Migraine Diagnosis Rules Where You'll Need Them

Remind coders what qualifies as 'chronic.'

Pain management clinics see their share of patients suffering from chronic migraines. The rub is knowing how to identify if a patient's headaches have achieved chronic status, for diagnosis coding purposes.

Figuring out whether a patient has a chronic migraine (G43.7-, Chronic migraine without aura) can be time-consuming, as there are some parameters that the condition must fit in order to be considered chronic for coding purposes.

Solution: Check out this list of indicators for chronic migraines from **Yvonne Bouvier, CPC, CEDC**, senior coding analyst for Bill Dunbar and Associates, LLC, in Indianapolis, Ind.

Then, make copies and post it where anyone in the office will need to decide whether a patient has a chronic migraine.

CHRONIC MIGRAINE SYMPTOMS

Chronic migraines occur 15 or more days per month for at least a three-month period without medication overuse (per the Mayo Clinic and the International Headache Society).

In addition, chronic migraine sufferers must have experienced two or more of the following symptoms eight or more days per month for at least three months:

- Moderate to severe headaches
- Each headache lasts 4 hours or more
- Headaches occurring on one side of your head only
- Headaches that are pulsating pain
- Headaches that are aggravated by routine physical activity
- Headaches causing vomiting / nausea or both
- Headaches coupled with sensitivity to light and sound.