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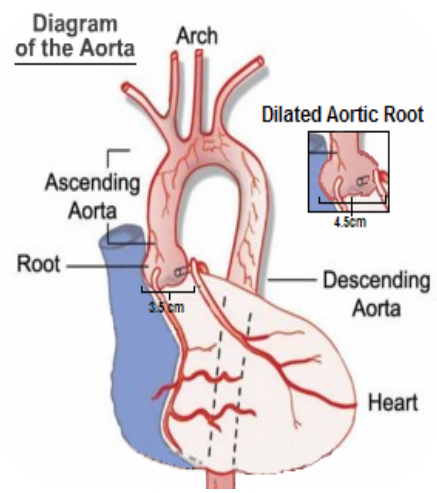
# Risk Adjustment Coding Academy- Coding Focus

## Getting to the Root of Aortic Ectasia




According to the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Aortic Aneurysm Fact Sheet*, in 2009 aortic aneurysms were the leading cause of 10,597 deaths and a contributing cause in more than 17,215 deaths.[1] An aortic aneurysm is a balloon-like bulge in the aorta (large artery that transmits blood from the heart through the chest and torso). [2]

### Risk Factors and Treatments

Some of the risk factors for ectasia (mild dilation) and aortic aneurysm include hypertension, atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), high cholesterol, smoking, age 65 or older, family history, and/or trauma causing injury to the artery. Additionally, some inherited connective tissue disorders (e.g., Marafan syndrome and Ehlers-Danlos syndrome) increase risk. An aneurysm may develop and become large before causing any symptoms; most aneurysms are discovered during tests performed for other reasons or screenings.

There are two main treatments for aortic aneurysms: medicine and surgery. Medicine can lower blood pressure, relax the blood vessels, and reduce the risk of rupture. Surgery can repair or replace the weak and/or damaged segment of the aorta.

### Specificity in Documentation

For coding purposes, documentation needs to specify:

- Aortic Location: Valve, Root, Ascending, Descending, Abdominal, Thoracic, Thoracoabdominal, etc.
- Severity: Ectasia, Aneurysm
- Complications: Dissection (split allowing leakage), Rupture (burst), Syphilitic (infection)

Per *AHA Coding Clinic,* "Aortic ectasia refers to mild dilation of the aorta that is not defined as an aneurysm, usually less than 3 cm in diameter. Previously aortic ectasia was indexed to code 441.9, Aortic aneurysm of unspecified site without mention of rupture; however, patients with aortic ectasia do not have an aortic aneurysm. As of October 1, 2010, subcategory 447.7, Aortic ectasia, has been created to specifically differentiate this condition."[3]

Annuloaortic ectasia is defined as a dilation or an enlargement of the ascending aorta (top section of the aorta), the aortic annulus and/or a loss of function of the aorta. The aortic root is the section of the aorta that is attached to the heart, it includes the annulus (tough, fibrous ring), leaflets of the aortic valve, and the openings where the coronary arteries attach. According to the *Coder's Desk Reference for Diagnoses*, "Aortic ectasia is not synonymous with annuloaortic ectasia, involving dilation of the aortic valve root, which is separately classifed to code 424.1, aortic valve disorders."[4]

**ICD-10 Mapping**

| ICD-9 Code | ICD-10 Code |
|---|---|
| **447.70 (HCC108)- Aortic ectasia, unsp. site** | **I77.819 (HCC 108)- Aortic ectasia, unsp. site** |
| **424.1 (no HCC)- Aortic valve disorder (annuloaortic ectasia)** | **I35.8 (no HCC)- Other nonrheumatic aortic valve disorder (annuloaortic ectasia)** |
| **441 Cat. (HCC 107)- Aortic aneurysm and dissection** | **I71 Cat. (HCC 107)- Aortic aneurysm and dissection** |

The table above is a comparison between ICD-9 and ICD-10 for aortic ectasia, aortic valve disorder, and aortic aneuyrsm and dissection.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, Aortic Aneurysm Fact Sheet (accessed June 2015): http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/data_statistics/fact_sheets/fs_aortic_aneurysm.htm
2 National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, What Is an Aneurysm? (accessed June 2015): http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/arm/
3 AHA Coding Clinic, 2010, Q4, "Aortic Ectasia"
4 Beth Ford (2012) Coder's Desk Reference for Diagnoses: Optum Insight