

Risk Adjustment Coding Academy- Coding Focus

Congestive Heart Failure



Heart failure is a serious medical condition that occurs when the heart is no longer able to pump blood as it should. The body depends on the heart to pump oxygen and nutrients in the blood throughout the body. When the heart muscle becomes damaged or weakened, it is no longer able to sufficiently meet the body's needs for blood and oxygen. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), about 5.7 million adults in the United States have heart failure. Approximately half of those who develop heart failure die within five years of the initial diagnosis¹.

Congestive Heart Failure

Congestive Heart Failure, or CHF, is a specific type of heart failure. In CHF, the blood that flows out from the heart is slowed, which causes the blood that is returning to the heart to become backed up in the veins, creating congestion within the body's tissues. This congestion can produce swelling, known as edema, which is usually found in the ankles and legs. Excess fluid can also accumulate in other areas, such as the lungs, making it difficult to breathe and increasing the risk of respiratory distress².

Symptoms

There are a variety of symptoms that a person with heart failure may have which include:

- Feeling weak or tired
- Shortness of breath from daily activities
- Chronic coughing or wheezing
- Weight gain and swelling in the legs, ankles and feet or stomach

Causes and Treatment

There are multiple factors that can lead to CHF. It is more likely to occur in persons over the age of 65. Having certain medical conditions such as diabetes, coronary artery disease, having a previous heart attack and high blood pressure can also increase the risk. Certain behaviors may also be contributing factors, such as smoking tobacco, eating a diet high in cholesterol, fat and sodium, not getting enough exercise and being obese.

While heart failure is considered to be a long-term (chronic) condition, there are a variety of treatments available to help manage symptoms. Medications like diuretics or blood vessel dilators may be prescribed as well as lifestyle changes that include a sodium reduced diet, increased exercise and smoking cessation. Additionally, there are surgical options, such as angioplasty or coronary artery bypass. In the most severe cases, a heart transplant may be the only effective treatment option³.

Coding Guidance

Per the AHA Coding Clinic, 2014, Volume One, "coders cannot assume either diastolic or systolic failure or a

combination of both." ICD-10-CM contains specific codes for systolic, diastolic and combined congestive heart failure with additional detail to indicate acuity (acute, chronic, acute on chronic)⁴. Providers will need to document the specific type and acuity in order to code to the highest degree of specificity.

Heart Failure (HCC 85)

150.1 – Left ventricular failure, unspecified

150.2_*- Systolic (congestive) heart failure

150.3_*- Diastolic (congestive) heart failure

150.4_*- Combined systolic (congestive) and diastolic (congestive) heart failure

150.9 – Heart failure, unspecified

***Requires a fifth character:**

._0 – Unspecified

._1 – Acute

._2 – Chronic

._3 – Acute on chronic

New ICD-10 Subcategory added 10/01/17: 150.8 Reference codebook for applicable fifth and sixth characters

Resources:

¹ Centers for Disease Control. (n.d.) Heart Failure Fact Sheet. Retrieved February 15, 2017 from cdc.gov

² U.S. National Library of Medicine. (n.d.). Heart Failure. Retrieved February 15, 2017 from medlineplus.gov

³ American Heart Association. (n.d.) Treatment Options for Heart Failure. Retrieved February 15, 2017 from heart.org

⁴ Schmidt, A., Kenney, A., Krawzik, K., & Willard, P. (2016). ICD-10-CM expert for physicians 2017: The complete official code set. Place of publication not identified: Optum360[®]