

Coding of Seizures and Epilepsy

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Seizure- 780.39

- A seizure is a paroxysmal behavioral spell generally caused by an excessive disorderly discharge of cortical nerve cells
- Epileptic seizures range from clinically undetectable (“electrographic seizures”) to convulsions.
- The symptoms vary depending upon the part of the brain involved in the epileptic discharge
- Most seizures last for about 1 minute

Epilepsy -345

- Epilepsy is a syndrome of two or more unprovoked or recurrent seizures on more than one occasion
- Epileptic syndromes are characterized by:
 - The behavior during the seizure(s) (semiology)
 - The age of onset
 - Etiology, if known
 - EEG characteristics of the seizure type(s)

Intractability

- Fifth digit subclassification
 - 0 without mention of intractable epilepsy
 - 1 with intractable epilepsy
 - pharmacoresistant
(pharmacologically resistant)
 - treatment resistant
 - refractory (medically or surgically)
 - poorly controlled
 - breakthrough
 - exacerbation of seizures

Recurrent Seizures 345.X1

- Term is used to indicate a patient with epilepsy who had previously controlled seizures who has had a return of seizures or that the rate of seizures has increased in that patient
- Some physicians, especially emergency physicians substitute the term “exacerbation of seizures” by analogy to asthma coding

Breakthrough Seizure – 345.X1

- This term is given to patients with epilepsy who have not had a seizure for a long interval and then had another seizure
- Synonym to recurrent seizure
 - Implied by usage is that the patient has had epileptic seizures previously, thus recurrent seizures or epilepsy

Repetitive Seizures – 780.39

- This term is given when a patient has several seizures in a short period of time
- In a patient without a history of epilepsy, the most common cause is acute symptomatic seizures as a response to a central nervous system derangement
 - Acute stroke, acute head injury, acute alcohol withdrawal
- Repetitive seizures could occur in patients with epilepsy, in which case, the code would be 345.x1

Non-Epileptic Seizures I

- There are many paroxysmal behavioral spells that resemble epileptic seizures.
- Sometimes impossible to distinguish from epileptic seizures without video EEG monitoring

Non-Epileptic Seizures II

- Many causes
 - Cardiac – syncope, dysrhythmias
 - Endocrine – hypoglycemia
 - Sleep disorders – Sleep apnea, REM behavior disorder
 - Neurologic – tics, myoclonus, frontotemporal dementia
 - Psychologic – panic attacks, autistic behaviors, etc.

Non-Epileptic Seizures III

- We propose to add the index terms under Seizures
 - Non-epileptic – 780.39
 - Psychogenic – 780.39
- For psychogenic non-epileptic seizures
 - We propose that a secondary psychiatric diagnostic code be used

Acute Symptomatic Seizures

VS.

Late onset Epilepsy

- Early seizures after acute brain derangement are symptomatic of the disturbance of brain function and do not predict the later development of epilepsy
 - Trauma, stroke, encephalitis, alcohol withdrawal
- Seizures beginning weeks to years later represent the development of epilepsy as a late effect and coded as such, 907.0, 438.9, 139.0