

Coding for Headache

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Accurate coding is an important function of neurologic practice. This contribution to **CONTINUUM** is part of an ongoing series that presents helpful coding information along with examples related to the issue topic. Tips for diagnosis coding, evaluation and management coding, procedure coding, or a combination are presented, depending on which is most useful for the subject area of the issue.

EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT CURRENT PROCEDURAL TERMINOLOGY CODING

Headache management requires significant face-to-face time between provider and patient, and the time spent in counseling and coordination of care may substantially prolong the outpatient visit. Fortunately, the time it takes to perform these activities is recognized and may increase reimbursement for the encounter if coded for properly. If time spent in counseling and coordination of care is greater than 50% of the total time of the visit, then the level of service based on the Evaluation and Management Current Procedural Terminology codes may be chosen according to time spent rather than fulfillment of the elements of the history or physical examination. The documentation must include the total time of the visit, the time spent in counseling and coordination of care, and a description of the medical necessity for the counseling and coordination of care.

Example: During a subsequent office visit with a patient with medication-overuse headache, the physician spends 30 out of a total of 45 minutes discussing control of medication overuse with the patient and his significant other. These times are documented, along with the medical necessity. At least 25 minutes of counseling is needed to qualify for a 99214 counseling visit. This code may be submitted for the visit with this documentation even though the history and examination elements have not been fulfilled.

ICD-9-CM CODING

Currently, *International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM)* diagnosis codes must be used for inpatient and outpatient physician billing. Always use the most specific code available. The documentation should include terms that are associated with the diagnosis code descriptions and an indication that this diagnosis was addressed during the encounter. Good documentation makes choosing a code easier. Persons with headache often have multiple diagnoses related to both the headache disorder and to coexistent conditions that impact headache or its treatment. The following points should be considered:

- (1) Is the encounter for evaluation or treatment of a headache disorder or does the encounter address a complication due to comorbidity or treatment?

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Relationship Disclosure:

Dr Silberstein is on the advisory panel of and receives honoraria from Allergan, Inc.; Amgen, Inc.; Capnia, Inc.; Amgen, Inc.; Capnia, Inc.; Coherex Medical, Inc.; GlaxoSmithKline; Iroko Pharmaceuticals, LLC; Eli Lilly and Company; MAP Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; Medtronic, Inc.; Merck & Co., Inc.; eNeura Therapeutics; NINDS; NuPathe, Inc.; Pfizer, Inc.; and St. Jude Medical, Inc. He serves as a consultant for and receives honoraria from Amgen, Inc.; MAP Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; Nautilus Pharma; Novartis; OptiNose US, Inc.; and Zogenix, Inc. His employer receives research support from Allergan, Inc.; Bristol-Myers Squibb; Cumberland Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; ElectroCore, LLC; Eli Lilly and Company; Merck & Co., Inc.; OptiNose US, Inc.; St. Jude Medical, Inc.; and Troy Healthcare, LLC.

Dr Powers serves as *ICD-9-CM* advisor for the Coding Subcommittee of the AAN Medical Economics and Management Committee and serves in an editorial capacity for *Neurology: Clinical Practice*.

Unlabeled Use of Products/Investigational Use Disclosure:

Drs Silberstein and Powers report no disclosures.

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Patients may develop a medication reaction, such as tachycardia or chest pain, that needs to be coded. The diagnosis for the primary reason for the visit is coded first.

- (2) Does the patient have a primary headache, a secondary headache, or both? Patients with head trauma may have both posttraumatic headache and exacerbation of new-onset migraine.
- (3) Does the patient have more than one type of primary headache? Patients with migraine often have milder headaches that can be coded as tension-type headache. Patients with migraine with aura often have attacks of migraine without aura. Remember, you are coding headache *attacks*.
- (4) What are the complications?

The *ICD-9-CM* recognizes the presence or absence of status migrainosus and intractability. The *ICD-9-CM* also equates “intractable” with “refractory.”

Example: A patient with an established diagnosis of migraine with and without aura returns to the office with a report of cervical pain during his nonaura migraine headache, which has been going on for 4 days. The following diagnosis codes would be submitted on the claim:

346.12 Migraine without aura, without mention of intractable migraine with status migrainosus
 723.1 Cervicalgia
 346.00 Migraine with aura, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus

Example: A patient with an established diagnosis of migraine with and without aura returns to the office with a near-daily nonaura headache for the past 3 months and attacks of migraine 3 times per week. The patient uses triptans for each attack. The patient is counseled about overuse of triptans as a cause of the conversion to chronic migraine. The following diagnosis codes would be submitted on the claim:

346.71 Chronic migraine without aura, with intractable migraine, so stated, without mention of status migrainosus
 339.3 Drug induced headache, not elsewhere classified
 346.00 Migraine with aura, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus

Try to be as specific as possible in coding coexistent diseases that are addressed during the visit. For example, the *ICD-9-CM* has special instructions for codes for hypertension and diabetes. If the hypertension is secondary, then two codes are required, one for the secondary hypertension and one for the cause. In order to choose a specific code for diabetes, it is important to document whether the diabetes is primary or secondary, type 1 or type 2, and controlled

or uncontrolled. Medical records often do not include information regarding the control of hypertension or other disorders that are not being managed by the neurologist but that impact headache care. While coding nonspecific diagnoses is discouraged, there may be occasions when this is the best information available.

Example: During an outpatient visit for a patient with migraine with and without aura, the physician spends part of the visit evaluating coexistent conditions. This patient has a history of essential hypertension and obesity. Lifestyle change, diet, and medication are all discussed during the visit, as are the contraindications to certain medications. The diagnosis codes for this encounter are as follows:

- 346.00 Migraine with aura, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus
- 346.10 Migraine without aura, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus
- 278.00 Obesity, unspecified
- 401.9 Unspecified essential hypertension

ICD-10-CM CODING

The exact date of implementation of the *International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-10-CM)* in the United States is currently being reconsidered. The proposed date as of this article's submission is October 1, 2014. *ICD-10-CM* codes are up to seven characters long and alphanumeric. The first character is always the letter corresponding to the chapter (system). The new codes are both more detailed and more logical. The new headache codes follow.

Headache Codes from ICD-9-CM Mapped to ICD-10-CM

ICD-9-CM Descriptor		ICD-10-CM Descriptor	
307.81	Pain disorders related to psychological factors: tension headache	G44.209	Tension-type headache, unspecified, not intractable
339.00	Cluster headache syndrome, unspecified	G44.001	Cluster headache syndrome, unspecified, intractable
		G44.009	Cluster headache syndrome, unspecified, not intractable
339.01	Episodic cluster headache	G44.011	Episodic cluster headache, intractable
		G44.019	Episodic cluster headache, not intractable

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ICD-9-CM Descriptor		ICD-10-CM Descriptor	
339.02	Chronic cluster headache	G44.021	Chronic cluster headache, intractable
		G44.029	Chronic cluster headache, not intractable
339.03	Episodic paroxysmal hemicrania	G44.031	Episodic paroxysmal hemicrania, intractable
		G44.039	Episodic paroxysmal hemicrania, not intractable
339.04	Chronic paroxysmal hemicrania	G44.041	Chronic paroxysmal hemicrania, intractable
		G44.049	Chronic paroxysmal hemicrania, not intractable
339.05	Short lasting unilateral neuralgiform headache with conjunctival injection and tearing	G44.051	Short lasting unilateral neuralgiform headache with conjunctival injection and tearing (SUNCT), intractable
		G44.059	Short lasting unilateral neuralgiform headache with conjunctival injection and tearing (SUNCT), not intractable
339.09	Other trigeminal autonomic cephalgias	G44.091	Other trigeminal autonomic cephalgias (TAC), intractable
		G44.099	Other trigeminal autonomic cephalgias (TAC), not intractable
339.10	Tension type headache, unspecified	G44.201	Tension-type headache, unspecified, intractable
		G44.209	Tension-type headache, unspecified, not intractable
339.11	Episodic tension type headache	G44.211	Episodic tension-type headache, intractable
		G44.219	Episodic tension-type headache, not intractable
339.12	Chronic tension type headache	G44.221	Chronic tension-type headache, intractable
		G44.229	Chronic tension-type headache, not intractable
339.20	Post-traumatic headache, unspecified	G44.301	Post-traumatic headache, unspecified, intractable

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ICD-9-CM Descriptor		ICD-10-CM Descriptor	
		G44.309	Post-traumatic headache, unspecified, not intractable
339.21	Acute post-traumatic headache	G44.311	Acute post-traumatic headache, intractable
		G44.319	Acute post-traumatic headache, not intractable
339.22	Chronic post-traumatic headache	G44.321	Chronic post-traumatic headache, intractable
		G44.329	Chronic post-traumatic headache, not intractable
339.3	Drug induced headache, not elsewhere classified		<i>Use additional code for adverse effect, if applicable, to identify drug (T36-T50 with fifth or sixth character 5)</i>
		G44.40	Drug-induced headache, not elsewhere classified, not intractable
		G44.41	Drug-induced headache, not elsewhere classified, intractable
339.41	Hemicrania continua	G44.51	Hemicrania continua
339.42	New daily persistent headache	G44.52	New daily persistent headache (NDPH)
339.43	Primary thunderclap headache	G44.53	Primary thunderclap headache
339.44	Other complicated headache syndrome	G44.59	Other complicated headache syndrome
339.81	Hypnic headache	G44.81	Hypnic headache
339.82	Headache associated with sexual activity	G44.82	Headache associated with sexual activity
339.83	Primary cough headache	G44.83	Primary cough headache
339.84	Primary exertional headache	G44.84	Primary exertional headache
339.85	Primary stabbing headache	G44.85	Primary stabbing headache
339.89	Other headache syndromes	G44.89	Other headache syndrome
346.00	Migraine with aura, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus	G43.109	Migraine with aura, not intractable, without status migrainosus

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ICD-9-CM Descriptor	ICD-10-CM Descriptor
346.01 Migraine with aura, with intractable migraine, so stated, without mention of status migrainosus	G43.119 Migraine with aura, intractable, without status migrainosus
346.02 Migraine with aura, without mention of intractable migraine with status migrainosus	G43.101 Migraine with aura, not intractable, with status migrainosus
346.03 Migraine with aura, with intractable migraine, so stated, with status migrainosus	G43.111 Migraine with aura, intractable, with status migrainosus
346.10 Migraine without aura, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus	G43.009 Migraine without aura, not intractable, without status migrainosus
346.11 Migraine without aura, with intractable migraine, so stated, without mention of status migrainosus	G43.019 Migraine without aura, intractable, without status migrainosus
346.12 Migraine without aura, without mention of intractable migraine with status migrainosus	G43.001 Migraine without aura, not intractable, with status migrainosus
346.13 Migraine without aura, with intractable migraine, so stated, with status migrainosus	G43.011 Migraine without aura, intractable, with status migrainosus
346.20 Variants of migraine, not elsewhere classified, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus	G43.809 Other migraine, not intractable, without status migrainosus
	G43.A0 Cyclical vomiting, not intractable
	G43.B0 Ophthalmoplegic migraine, not intractable
	G43.C0 Periodic headache syndromes in child or adult, not intractable
	G43.D0 Abdominal migraine, not intractable

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ICD-9-CM Descriptor	ICD-10-CM Descriptor
346.21 Variants of migraine, not elsewhere classified, with intractable migraine, so stated, without mention of status migrainosus	G43.819 Other migraine, intractable, without status migrainosus G43.A1 Cyclical vomiting, intractable G43.B1 Ophthalmoplegic migraine, intractable G43.C1 Periodic headache syndromes in child or adult, intractable G43.D1 Abdominal migraine, intractable
346.22 Variants of migraine, not elsewhere classified, without mention of intractable migraine with status migrainosus	G43.801 Other migraine, not intractable, with status migrainosus
346.23 Variants of migraine, not elsewhere classified, with intractable migraine, so stated, with status migrainosus	G43.811 Other migraine, intractable, with status migrainosus
346.30 Hemiplegic migraine, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus	G43.409 Hemiplegic migraine, not intractable, without status migrainosus
346.31 Hemiplegic migraine, with intractable migraine, so stated, without mention of status migrainosus	G43.419 Hemiplegic migraine, intractable, without status migrainosus
346.32 Hemiplegic migraine, without mention of intractable migraine with status migrainosus	G43.401 Hemiplegic migraine, not intractable, with status migrainosus
346.33 Hemiplegic migraine, with intractable migraine, so stated, with status migrainosus	G43.411 Hemiplegic migraine, intractable, with status migrainosus
346.40 Menstrual migraine, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus	G43.829 Menstrual migraine, not intractable, without status migrainosus

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ICD-9-CM Descriptor		ICD-10-CM Descriptor	
346.41	Menstrual migraine, with intractable migraine, so stated, without mention of status migrainosus	G43.839	Menstrual migraine, intractable, without status migrainosus
346.42	Menstrual migraine, without intractable migraine with status migrainosus	G43.821	Menstrual migraine, not intractable, with status migrainosus
346.43	Menstrual migraine, with intractable migraine, so stated, with status migrainosus	G43.831	Menstrual migraine, intractable, with status migrainosus
346.50	Persistent migraine aura without cerebral infarction, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus	G43.509	Persistent migraine aura without cerebral infarction, not intractable, without status migrainosus
346.51	Persistent migraine aura without cerebral infarction, with intractable migraine, so stated, without mention of status migrainosus	G43.519	Persistent migraine aura without cerebral infarction, intractable, without status migrainosus
346.52	Persistent migraine aura without cerebral infarction, without mention of intractable migraine with status migrainosus	G43.501	Persistent migraine aura without cerebral infarction, not intractable, with status migrainosus
346.53	Persistent migraine aura without cerebral infarction, with intractable migraine, so stated, with status migrainosus	G43.511	Persistent migraine aura without cerebral infarction, intractable, with status migrainosus
346.60	Persistent migraine aura with cerebral infarction, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus	G43.609	Persistent migraine aura with cerebral infarction, not intractable, without status migrainosus

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ICD-9-CM Descriptor	ICD-10-CM Descriptor
346.61 Persistent migraine aura with cerebral infarction, with intractable migraine so stated, without mention of status migrainosus	G43.619 Persistent migraine aura with cerebral infarction, intractable, without status migrainosus
346.62 Persistent migraine aura with cerebral infarction, without mention of intractable migraine with status migrainosus	G43.601 Persistent migraine aura with cerebral infarction, not intractable, with status migrainosus
346.63 Persistent migraine aura with cerebral infarction, with intractable migraine, so stated, with status migrainosus	G43.611 Persistent migraine aura with cerebral infarction, intractable, with status migrainosus
346.70 Chronic migraine without aura, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus	G43.709 Chronic migraine without aura, not intractable, without status migrainosus
346.71 Chronic migraine without aura, with intractable migraine, so stated, without mention of status migrainosus	G43.719 Chronic migraine without aura, intractable, without status migrainosus
346.72 Chronic migraine without aura, without mention of intractable migraine with status migrainosus	G43.701 Chronic migraine without aura, not intractable, with status migrainosus
346.73 Chronic migraine without aura, with intractable migraine, so stated, with status migrainosus	G43.711 Chronic migraine without aura, intractable, with status migrainosus
346.80 Other forms of migraine, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus	G43.809 Other migraine, not intractable, without status migrainosus
346.81 Other forms of migraine, with intractable migraine, so stated, without mention of status migrainosus	G43.819 Other migraine, intractable, without status migrainosus

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ICD-9-CM Descriptor		ICD-10-CM Descriptor	
346.82	Other forms of migraine, without mention of intractable migraine with status migrainosus	G43.801	Other migraine, not intractable, with status migrainosus
346.83	Other forms of migraine, with intractable migraine, so stated, with status migrainosus	G43.811	Other migraine, intractable, with status migrainosus
346.90	Migraine, unspecified, without mention of intractable migraine without mention of status migrainosus	G43.909	Migraine, unspecified, not intractable, without status migrainosus
346.91	Migraine, unspecified, with intractable migraine, so stated, without mention of status migrainosus	G43.919	Migraine, unspecified, intractable, without status migrainosus
346.92	Migraine, unspecified, without mention of intractable migraine with status migrainosus	G43.901	Migraine, unspecified, not intractable, with status migrainosus
346.93	Migraine, unspecified, with intractable migraine, so stated, with status migrainosus	G43.911	Migraine, unspecified, intractable, with status migrainosus
349.0	Reaction to spinal or lumbar puncture	G97.1	Other reaction to spinal and lumbar puncture
784.0	Headache	R51	Headache
		G44.1	Vascular headache, not elsewhere classified Excludes: cluster headache (G44.0) complicated headache syndromes (G44.5) drug-induced headache (G44.4) migraine (G43.X) other specified headache syndromes (G44.8) post-traumatic headache (G44.3) tension-type headache (G44.2)

Using a crosswalk is not a substitution for also consulting the full classification. There may be instructions in the index or tabular classification that alter the choices from the table above.

CONCLUSIONS

Patients often have more than one headache type; diagnose each type. With a secondary headache, diagnose both cause (eg, posttraumatic headache) and the headache phenotype (eg, migraine). Diagnose all comorbid and coexistent disorders.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, National Center for Health Statistics. ICD-9-CM official guidelines for coding and reporting. www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd9/icdguide10.pdf. Updated October 1, 2010. Accessed May 4, 2012.
2. Headache Classification Committee of the International Headache Society. The International Classification of Headache Disorders, 2nd edition. *Cephalalgia* 2004;24(suppl 1):9–160.