ICD-10-CM DOCUMENTATION AND CODING BEST PRACTICES:

Atherosclerosis of the extremities & Gangrene

wellcare ™

Atherosclerosis of the extremities

Atherosclerosis of the extremities is a disease of the peripheral blood vessels that is characterized by narrowing and hardening of the arteries that supply the legs and feet. The narrowing of the arteries causes a decrease in blood flow. Symptoms include leg pain, numbness, cold legs or feet and muscle pain in the thighs, calves, or feet.

ICD-10-CM Code Information *Additional characters required for specificity*

I70 Atherosclerosis*

Includes:

arterial degeneration, arteriolosclerosis, arteriosclerosis, arteriosclerotic vascular disease, arteriovascular degeneration, atheroma, endarteritis deformans or obliterans, senile arteritis, senile endarteritis vascular degeneration

Use additional code to identify:

exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (Z77.22)
history of tobacco dependence (Z87.891)
occupational exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (Z57.31)
tobacco dependence (F17.-)
tobacco use (Z72.0)

Excludes2:

arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease (I25.1-)
arteriosclerotic heart disease (I25.1-)
atheroembolism (I75.-)
cerebral atherosclerosis (I67.2)
coronary atherosclerosis (I25.1-)
mesenteric atherosclerosis (K55.1)
precerebral atherosclerosis (I67.2)
primary pulmonary atherosclerosis (I27.0)

I70.0 Atherosclerosis of aorta

I70.2 Atherosclerosis of native arteries of the extremities*

Mönckeberg's (medial) sclerosis

Excludes2: atherosclerosis of bypass graft of extremities (I70.30-I70.79)

I70.3 Atherosclerosis of unspecified type of bypass graft(s) of the extremities*

Excludes1: embolism or thrombus of bypass graft(s) of extremities (T82.8-)

I70.4 Atherosclerosis of autologous vein bypass graft(s) of the extremities*

I70.5 Atherosclerosis of nonautologous biological bypass graft(s) of the extremities*

I70.6 Atherosclerosis of nonbiological bypass graft(s) of the extremities*

I70.7 Atherosclerosis of other type of bypass graft(s) of the extremities*

Note: For codes I70.2 through I70.7 use additional code, if applicable, to identify chronic total occlusion of artery of extremity (I70.92)

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Raynaud's syndrome

Raynaud's syndrome causes some areas of your body, such as extremities, to feel numb and cold in response to cold temperatures or stress. In this disease process, smaller arteries that supply blood to your skin become narrow, limiting blood flow to affected area.

If Raynaud's is severe — which is rare — reduced blood flow to your fingers or toes could cause tissue damage. A completely blocked artery can lead to skin ulcers or dead tissue.

ICD-10-CM Code Information

I73.00 Raynaud's syndrome without gangrene

I73.01 Raynaud's syndrome with gangrene

Excludes2:
chilblains (T69.1)
frostbite (T33-T34)
immersion hand or foot (T69.0-)
spasm of cerebral artery (G45.9)

Gangrene

Gangrene is death of body tissue due to a lack of blood flow or a serious bacterial infection. Gangrene commonly affects the extremities. Risk of gangrene is higher if a person has an underlying condition such as diabetes or atherosclerosis.

Gas gangrene typically affects deep muscle tissue. Gas gangrene is caused by infection with a bacterium called Clostridium perfringens. The bacterial infection produces toxins that release gas and cause tissue death.

ICD-10-CM Code Information

I96 Gangrene, not elsewhere classified
Gangrenous cellulitis

Excludes1: gangrene in atherosclerosis of native arteries of the extremities (I70.26)
gangrene in hernia (K40.1, K40.4, K41.1, K41.4, K42.1, K43.1, K44.1, K45.1, K46.1)
gangrene in other peripheral vascular diseases (I73.-)
gangrene of certain specified sites – see Alphabetical Index gas gangrene (A48.0)
pyoderma gangrenosum (L88)

Excludes2: gangrene in diabetes mellitus (E08- E13 with .52)

A48.0 Gas gangrene
Clostridial cellulitis
Clostridial myonecrosis

Excludes1: actinomycetoma (B47.1)

(continued)

Documentation Best Practices

✔ The codes in Category I70, Atherosclerosis, are classified by vessel, by site and by severity. Report the highest level of severity when a patient has multiple symptoms of lower extremity atherosclerosis. There is no need to report lesser diagnoses for the same extremity. The hierarchy, from most severe to least severe is:

- Gangrene, with tissue necrosis (highest level)
- Ulceration, with non-healing wound
- Rest pain, with chronic ischemia
- Intermittent claudication, with ischemia upon exertion (lowest specified level)

✔ Arteriosclerosis and atherosclerosis may be used interchangeably for documentation and coding purposes.

✔ When atherosclerosis is diagnosed by a clinician, the medical record should include the site, laterality followed by the symptom or complication. *Example: arteriosclerosis of the legs with intermittent claudication bilaterally.*

✔ There is a presumed causal relationship between diabetes and peripheral angiopathy. Both conditions should be coded as related even in the absence of provider documentation explicitly linking them, unless documentation clearly states the conditions are not related.

✔ Document on the progress notes positive findings for diagnostic testing such as ankle-brachial index (ABI), and/or doppler ultrasounds. Also document a treatment plan such as medications, surgery, and lifestyle modifications.

Peripheral Vascular Disease, Unspecified

Peripheral vascular disease (PVD) is a blood circulation disorder that causes the blood vessels outside of your heart and brain to narrow, block or spasm. This can happen in your arteries or veins. PVD typically causes pain and fatigue, often in the legs, and especially during exercise. The pain usually improved with rest.

Peripheral artery disease is a common condition in which narrowed arteries reduce blood flow to the arms or legs. In peripheral artery disease (PAD) the legs or arms, usually the legs, don't receive enough blood flow to keep up with demand. This may cause leg pain when walking (claudication) and other symptoms. Peripheral artery disease is usually a sign of buildup of fatty deposits in the arteries (atherosclerosis).

ICD-10-CM Code Information

I73.9 Peripheral vascular disease, unspecified
Intermittent claudication
Peripheral angiopathy NOS Spasm of artery

Excludes 1: Atherosclerosis of the extremities (I70.2-I70.7)

References

1. *"ICD-10". Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, CMS.gov. http://www.cms.gov/medicare/coding/icd10*

2. *"Heart Disease". Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Cancer Prevention and Control CDC, 14 April 2023, https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease*