

CHAPTER 7

INJURY AND EXTERNAL CAUSE CODING

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Abstract

Trauma and injury coding in ICD-10-CM encompasses a comprehensive classification system for documenting various types of injuries, their causes, and outcomes. The coding structure follows anatomical organization, beginning with head and neck injuries (S00-S19), proceeding through thorax and trunk (S20-S39), to extremities (S40-S99). Effects and complications codes (T07-T88) cover multiple body regions, foreign bodies, burns, frostbite, poisoning, and various complications. External cause codes document the circumstances of injuries, including transport accidents (V00-V99), falls, exposure to forces, and intentional harm. The system incorporates place of occurrence (Y92) and activity codes (Y93) to provide context. Encounter classification uses 7th character extensions to distinguish between initial (A) and subsequent encounters (D), with specific indicators for healing status. Sequela coding (S) documents late effects of injuries, requiring clear documentation of the time gap between original injury and resulting condition. Multiple injury coding follows a hierarchy prioritizing the most severe injuries, with specific guidelines for combining injuries and sequencing codes. This structured approach ensures accurate documentation of injury severity, causation, treatment phase, and outcomes in medical records.

Keywords: *Injury classification; External cause codes; Encounter designation; Sequela documentation; Multiple trauma coding*

Learning Objectives

After completion of the chapter, the learners should be able to:

- Differentiate between anatomical injury codes and identify appropriate code ranges for specific body regions.
- Apply external cause codes correctly to document injury circumstances, including transport accidents and environmental exposures.
- Demonstrate proper use of 7th character extensions for initial encounters, subsequent visits, and sequela documentation.
- Select appropriate Y92 and Y93 codes to indicate place of occurrence and activity during injury.
- Apply multiple injury coding guidelines, including proper sequencing of primary and secondary injuries.
- Identify and document healing status variations and complications in injury recovery using appropriate modifiers

T RAUMA AND INJURY CODING

Head/Neck (S00-S19)

- Head injuries (S00-S09)
- Neck injuries (S10-S19)

Thorax/Trunk (S20-S39)

- Thorax injuries (S20-S29)
- Abdomen/lower back/pelvis (S30-S39)

Extremities (S40-S99)

Upper limb (S40-S69)

- Shoulder/upper arm (S40-S49)
- Elbow/forearm (S50-S59)
- Wrist/hand (S60-S69)

Lower limb (S70-S99)

- Hip/thigh (S70-S79)
- Knee/lower leg (S80-S89)
- Ankle/foot (S90-S99)

Effects/Complications (T07-T88)

- Multiple body regions (T07)
- Foreign bodies (T15-T19)
- Burns/corrosions (T20-T32)
- Frostbite (T33-T34)
- Poisoning (T36-T50)
- Toxic effects (T51-T65)
- Other external effects (T66-T78)
- Complications (T80-T88)

EXTERNAL CAUSE CODES

Transport Accidents (V00-V99)

- Pedestrian (V00-V09)
- Pedal cyclist (V10-V19)
- Motorcycle rider (V20-V29)
- Vehicle occupant (V30-V79)
- Other land transport (V80-V89)
- Water/air transport (V90-V99)

Other External Causes (W00-X58)

- Falls (W00-W19)
- Exposure to forces (W20-W49)
- Accidental drowning (W65-W74)

- Other accidental threats to breathing (W75-W84)
- Electric current/radiation (W85-W99)
- Fire/heat/hot substances (X00-X19)
- Natural forces (X30-X39)
- Poisoning/exposure (X40-X58)

Intent Codes (X71-Y09)

- Self-harm (X71-X83)
- Assault (X92-Y09)

Place of Occurrence (Y92)

- Home (Y92.0)
- Residential institution (Y92.1)
- School (Y92.2)
- Sports area (Y92.3)
- Street/highway (Y92.4)
- Public area (Y92.5)

Activity Codes (Y93)

- Sports activities (Y93.0)
- Leisure activities (Y93.1)
- Working (Y93.2)
- Educational (Y93.3)

Table. Common External Cause Scenarios and Their Code Assignments

Scenario Type	Code Range	Required Elements	Additional Coding
Transport Accidents	V00-V99	Vehicle type, Role of patient, Circumstances	Place of occurrence
Falls	W00-W19	Height, Surface type, Circumstance	Activity code
Sports Injuries	Y93.0	Specific sport, Location	Type of injury

Scenario Type	Code Range	Required Elements	Additional Coding
Occupational	Y93.2	Work environment, Activity	Nature of injury
Assault	X92-Y09	Method, Intent	Place code
Environmental	X30-X39	Nature of exposure	Activity code

INITIAL VS. SUBSEQUENT ENCOUNTERS

7th character extensions

Initial Encounter (A)

- Emergency encounter
- Initial evaluation
- Active treatment
- Surgical treatment

Subsequent Encounter (D)

- Routine healing (D1)
- Delayed healing (D2)
- Problem healing (D3)
- Aftercare visits
- Follow-up care

Medical Care Status

- Routine healing
- Delayed healing
- Nonunion
- Malunion
- Complications

Table. Seventh Character Extensions and Their Applications in Injury Coding

Extension	Description	Common Scenarios	Documentation Requirements
A (Initial)	Active treatment phase	Emergency visits, First evaluation, Surgical treatment	Acute injury details, Treatment plan
D1	Routine healing	Normal follow-up care	Progress notes, Expected healing
D2	Delayed healing	Slower than expected	Healing complications, Intervention plans
D3	Problem healing	Complications present	Specific complications, Modified treatment
S (Sequela)	Late effects	Residual conditions	Original injury link, Time gap

SEQUELA

Late effects of injuries (T90-T98)

- Brain injury (T90.5)
- Spinal cord injury (T91.3)
- Fractures (T90.2, T91.2, T92.2, T93.2)
- Burns (T95)
- Poisoning (T96)
- Other trauma (T98)

Sequela Coding Rules:

- Use (S) as 7th character
- Code both sequela and original injury

- Link current condition to original injury
- Time gap must be documented

MULTIPLE INJURY CODING

Hierarchy Guidelines

Most Severe Injury First

- Life-threatening conditions
- Highest mortality risk
- Greatest resource use

Injury Combinations

- Head injuries with other sites (S00-S09)
- Spinal injuries with fractures (S12-S32)
- Multiple fractures (T02)
- Multiple wounds (T01)
- Multiple burns (T29)

Coding Order

- Principal injury (most severe)
- Additional injuries (anatomic order)
- Associated complications
- External cause codes

Special Circumstances

- Bilateral injuries
- Multiple sites same type
- Combined injuries
- Crush injuries (T04)

END OF PREVIEW

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