



Chronic Condition Coding Awareness: Depression

Depression

Depression (major depressive disorder or clinical depression) is a common but serious mood disorder. It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working. To be diagnosed with depression, the symptoms must be present for at least two weeks¹. Doctors aren't sure what causes depression, but a prominent theory is altered brain structure and chemical function. Depression is not a sign of weakness or a negative personality. It is a major public health problem and a treatable medical condition².

Symptoms of Depression

Some of the signs and symptoms of depression can be experienced most of the day, or nearly every day, for at least two weeks. These include feelings of sadness, anxiousness, hopelessness, irritability, guilt, decreased energy or fatigue, loss of interest, decreased energy or fatigue, feeling restless, difficulty concentrating or sleeping, appetite changes, and/or thoughts of death or suicide¹.

Treatment of Depression

Depression, even the most severe cases, can be treated. The earlier that treatment can begin, the more effective it is. Depression is usually treated with medications, psychotherapy, or a combination of the two¹. In addition to therapy and medication research also suggests pets and exercise is a potent weapon against mild to moderate depression².

Depression Coding Guidance

TIPS:	ICD-10 Mapping & Education
➤ ICD-10-CM	F32.0 – F33.9 (Major depressive disorder) ³
➤ Attempt for more specificity...	Avoid broad terms and unspecified codes such as “Depression”, F32.9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be meticulous in picking up the details in documentation. ○ It leads to precise coding and a better awareness about the disease and the population it affects.
➤ In the documentation use terms that specify...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Severity (mild, moderate, severe) ○ Episodes (single, recurrent, or in remission)
➤ Depression Screening Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mental Health America offers a convenient questionnaire making it easy to obtain specific diagnosis codes⁴. ○ Note all disclaimers on the website. ○ Visit http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mental-health-screen/patient-health.
➤ Refilling medication	Don't forget to verify the condition and list the diagnosis in the Assessment & Plan.

1. National Institute of Mental Health: Bipolar Disorder (revised October 2016) <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>
2. WebMD: Depression: What Is It? (reviewed May 07, 2016) <http://www.webmd.com/depression/ss/slideshow-depression-overview>
3. 2017 ICD-10-CM Expert for Physicians: The Complete Official Code Set, Optum360. 2016 Optum360, LLC
4. Mental Health America: Depression Screening <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mental-health-screen/patient-health>