



Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders EARLY AND SUSTAINED REMISSION

by Nancy J. Andersen, MS, RHIA, CCS

Distinguishing between a current substance use disorder (i.e., abuse or dependence) and one that is in remission is important for both clinical treatment and statistical reporting purposes. Previously, the clinical terms and classifications included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) to indicate remission (i.e., in early remission, in sustained remission) were not recognized in the International Classification of Diseases, Clinically Modified, 10th Edition (ICD-10-CM).

Continuity between ICD-10-CM and DSM-5 terminologies for substance use disorder in remission is required for accurate coding of these conditions for both diagnostic and statistical purposes. ICD-10-CM included diagnosis codes for substance dependence in remission (F1x.21), but did not include a code to indicate substance abuse in remission. While ICD-10-CM is an administrative classification, DSM-5 is a clinical criteria-based classification system

used by health care professionals to diagnose mental disorders. To better harmonize DSM-5 clinical terms with ICD-10-CM diagnosis codes, the American Psychiatric Association (APA), along with various other health care organizations, partnered with the ICD-10 Coordination and Maintenance Committee to realign these two code sets.

Coding Change Details

ICD-10-CM code descriptions for substance use disorder differentiate between use, abuse, and dependence. These codes were revised last year to include nonessential modifiers to describe mild, moderate, and severe use disorder. However, DSM-5 clinical terminology further differentiates between those use disorders in early remission versus those in sustained remission. Additionally, ICD-10-CM did not include a code to describe “abuse” in remission. The results of this effort are new and revised ICD-10-CM codes for those substance use disorders described as abuse (mild use disorder), and dependence (moderate or severe

use disorder) in chapter five, Mental, Behavioral and Neurodevelopmental Disorders.

The APA applies the following definitions to describe remission.

Early Remission:

- Full criteria for substance use disorder¹ (SUD) were previously met.
- None of the criteria for SUD have been met for at least 3 months, but for less than 12 months, except for criterion 4, the craving or a strong desire or urge to use a specific substance.

Sustained Remission:

- Full criteria for SUD were previously met.
- None of the criteria for SUD have been met at any time during a period of 12 months or longer, except for criterion 4, craving or a strong desire or urge to use a specific substance.

¹ American Psychiatric Association defines substance use disorder (SUD) as mild, moderate, or severe. A minimum of 2-3 criteria is required for a mild substance use disorder diagnosis, while 4-5 is moderate, and 6-7 is severe. (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

New entries in the Alphabetic Index for substance abuse (alcohol or drug) in remission can be found for ICD-10 code categories F11 – F19. Here is an example of the ICD-10-CM 2018 Alphabetic Index for alcohol abuse in remission, with inclusion of DSM-5 clinical terms “early” and “sustained” as nonessential modifiers.

Abuse

alcohol (non-dependent) F10.10

with

anxiety disorder F10.180

intoxication F10.129

with delirium F10.121

uncomplicated F10.120

mood disorder F10.14

other specified disorder F10.188

psychosis F10.159

delusions F10.150

hallucinations F10.151

sexual dysfunction F10.181

sleep disorder F10.182

unspecified disorder F10.19

counseling and surveillance Z71.41

in remission (early) (sustained) F10.11

New and revised entries in Tabular Listing for substance abuse and dependence (alcohol or drug) in remission can be found for ICD-10 code categories F11 – F19. Here is an example of the ICD-10-CM 2018 Tabular Listing for alcohol abuse in remission and alcohol dependence in remission, with inclusion of DSM-5 clinical terms “early” and “sustained” as nonessential modifiers.

NEW CODE
<p>F10.11 Alcohol abuse, in remission Alcohol use disorder, mild in early remission Alcohol use disorder, mild in sustained remission</p>
REVISED CODE
<p>F10.21 Alcohol dependence, in remission Alcohol use disorder, moderate, in early remission Alcohol use disorder, moderate, in sustained remission Alcohol use disorder, severe, in early remission Alcohol use disorder, severe, in sustained remission</p>

Summary

DSM-5 is the clinical classification system used by health care providers to diagnose mental disorders. However, prior to October 1, 2017, there was a disconnect between clinical terms found in DSM-5 to describe a patient’s alcohol or substance use disorder in remission and the clinical terms found in the ICD-10-M Alphabetic Index and Tabular Listing. With the 2018 changes in the ICD-10-CM code set

now in effect, there is better harmonization between these two codes sets, with the clinical criteria and diagnostic terms applied by health care providers using DSM-5 now in alignment with ICD-10-CM for improved accuracy of coding for health statistics, quality measures, and data integrity.

References

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Nancy J. Andersen, MS, RHIA, CCS; Co-Chair, CHIA Coding & Data Quality Committee

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