



Physiology Coding Tip

Lumbago

In an effort to aid Health Information Management Coding Professionals with ICD-10 readiness, the following physiology training tip is provided with an educational intent.

Lumbago Defined

Lumbago is a nonclinical term for acute or chronic low or lumbar back pain without specified cause. Lumbago is a symptom that may be caused by a large variety of diseases and disorders that affect the lumbar spine which affects 80% of the general United States population at some point in life with sufficient severity to cause absence from work.

Signs and Symptoms of Lumbago

Stiffness of the lower back

Low back muscle spasm

Numbness or weakness of the legs

Pain that radiates down the leg

Localized to a surface area of the low back

Radicular pain caused by irritation of a nerve root

Diffuse pain spread over a larger area of the back from deep tissue layers

Referred pain perceived in the low back caused by inflammation elsewhere such as the kidneys or lower abdomen

Underlying Causes of Lumbago

Muscle strain: caused by heavy lifting or job-related stooping, bending, or other stressful postures; obesity; pregnancy.

Herniated Vertebral Disk: a disk bulging outward or rupture between the vertebrae causing chronic low back pain. Pain may also radiate down the leg if there is sciatic nerve impingement.

Spinal Stenosis: Narrowing of the spinal canal causing compression of the spinal nerve cord and pain.

Compression Fractures: Traumatic or pathologic in nature

Malignancy: Primary malignancy in the cauda equina or a secondary malignancy that has spread to the spine from a primary site.

Infection: Abscesses in the space between the spinal cord or dura mater; vertebral osteomyelitis; bladder infections; abdominal infections such as appendicitis

Ankylosing Spondylitis: A form of degenerative joint disease that affects the spine causing chronic low back pain; often confused with mechanical back pain in its early stages

Vascular insufficiency: Pain in the lower back and buttocks caused by vascular insufficiency such as terminal aortic occlusion.

Fibromyalgia: May affect the muscles and soft tissue of the lower back causing chronic muscle pain, fatigue and painful trigger points

References/Resources: 1. Mosby's Medical Dictionary 2. Hellman, David B. "Arthritis & Musculoskeletal Disorders." In *Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment*, 1998, edited by Stephen McPhee, et al., 37th ed. Stamford: Appleton & Lange, 1997. 3. WebMD

Coding Clinic is the official resource and authority for ICD-10 coding rules and conventions.

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