nh healthy families™

Chronic Condition Coding: Autistic Disorder

Autistic Disorder

Autism is a brain disorder that limits a person's ability to communicate and relate to other people[2]. Also known as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), the term "spectrum" reflects the wide variation in challenges and strengths possessed by each person[1]. Some people can navigate their world, some have exceptional abilities and some struggle to speak[2].

Symptoms of Autism

Signs of ASD tend to appear between two and three years of age and can include repeated motions and/or words, avoiding eye contact or physical touch, delays in learning to talk and getting upset by minor changes[2]. Additionally, some people with autism can experience physical symptoms such as constipation, sleep problems, poor coordination of muscles and seizures[2]. These signs, however, can also occur in children without ASD and at any age[12]. It is important that caregivers talk with a healthcare provider to request a screening for autism.

Treatment of Autism

Treatment for ASD is dependent on screening results. A diagnosis of autism is not needed for people to begin receiving services related to developmental delays or learning challenges[1]. Treatments include behavior programs, individualized education programs (IEPs), medication, sensory processing, assistive technology and diet[2].

Autistic Disorder Coding Guidance

TIPS:	ICD-10 Mapping & Education	
Refer to ICD-10-CM	F84.0 (Autistic disorder)[3]	
Use additional code…	… to identify any associated medical condition such as: • Constipation • Sleep problems • Poor coordination of muscles • Seizures	…and intellectual disabilities such as IQ: • Mild (IQ 50-69) F70 • Moderate (IQ 35-49) F71 • Severe (IQ 20-34) F72 • Profound (IQ under 20) F73 • Other intellectual disabilities F78 • Unspecified intellectual disabilities F79
Avoid terms such as "history of"…	…if patient is still being monitored for the condition. • Incorrect wording: *Patient has history of autism.* • Correct wording: *Patient has autism and continues medication.*	
Documentation and Coding Tips	The following language supports actively monitoring [any] condition and must be documented by the provider. In the documentation, mention… • If the patient is receiving therapy. • Getting a refill on medication. • The status of the condition.	

Resources 1. Autism Speaks: What is Autism? (https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism) 2. WebMD: What is Autism? (http://www.webmd.com/brain/autism/ss/slideshow-autism-overview) 3. 2017 ICD-10-CM Expert for Physicians: The Complete Official Code Set, Optum360. 2016 Optum360, LLC