

## Documentation and Coding Tips

# Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is often used as an umbrella term to describe emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and chronic asthma. If a patient predominately exhibits features of one specific disease over another, this should be documented rather than the less specific term of COPD. Document to the highest specificity to code accurately. Coding these conditions requires a solid understanding of the current ICD.10 coding guidelines.

## Specify When Documenting:

- **Type:** Emphysema, chronic bronchitis, chronic asthma
- **Severity:** Acute, chronic, intermittent, acute exacerbation, asthmatic, obstructive
- **Describe severity as:** Mild, moderate, persistent, or severe
- **Comorbidities:** Cardiac disease, diabetes, pulmonary artery disease, etc.
- **Cause:** Any known lower respiratory infections and the infectious agent
- **Clinical signs and symptoms:** Coughing, shortness of breath, sputum production, wheezing, etc.
- **Tobacco abuse, dependence, past history, or exposure (environmental or occupational)**
- **Any additional lung disease due to external agent and specify agent (gases, organic dust, vapor, etc.)**
- **Report any hypoxia, hypercapnia, hypoxemia, polycythemia, or chronic respiratory failure.**
- **Note any diagnostic tests:** ABG's (arterial blood gas), PFT (pulmonary function test), chest x-ray, etc.
- **Treatment:** Bronchodilators, tobacco counseling, dependence on ventilator, oxygen, steroids, tracheostomy, etc.

## Documentation and Coding Examples

### Non-specific documentation example:

Patient seen today for follow up of his COPD.

**Assign code:** J44.9 COPD, unspecified.

### Specific documentation examples:

Patient has decompensated COPD with continuous home oxygen.

**Assign code:** J44.1 COPD with (acute) exacerbation. Z99.81 dependence on supplemental oxygen.

Patient with emphysema presents due to moderate persistent asthma and COPD.

**Assign code:** J43.9 Emphysema, unspecified. J45.40 Moderate persistent asthma, uncomplicated.

*Note: Emphysema is a form of COPD so, you would not need an additional code to represent unspecified COPD.*