Aortic Atherosclerosis (I70.0)

**Overview:** Aortic atherosclerosis (I70.0) may be recommended for consideration when:

- Radiology defines the atherosclerotic burden as **moderate** or **severe**.
- or
- Radiology defines it as **mild** *(or does not define the severity)* and the patient has other atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, such as:
  - carotid artery atherosclerosis
  - peripheral arterial disease
  - history of atherosclerotic TIA/stroke
  - coronary artery disease (including severe coronary artery calcifications)
  - previous aortic aneurysm repair.

  **Note:** In these situations, aortic atherosclerosis can be thought of as a marker of predisposition for diffuse atherosclerotic disease and its complications.

  **Pearl:** Radiology may use synonyms for atherosclerosis, such as plaque or calcification.

---

**Documentation tips:**

**Active Management ("MEAT"):**
- Monitor
  - Symptoms
  - Disease progression/regression
  - Ordering tests
- Evaluate
  - Test results
  - Medication effectiveness
  - Response to treatment
  - Exam finding
- Assess/Address
  - Review records
  - Counseling
  - Documenting status
- Treat
  - Prescribe/continue medication/stopping
  - Surgical/other interventions
  - Referral to a specialist

**Common Pitfalls:**
- Nonspecific diagnosis
- Documentation and reported ICD-10 codes do not match
- Not enough information to indicate active assessment/management
- Not linking data/medications to the relevant condition in the assessment/plan.
- Not addressing both conditions when a single ICD-10 code represents a condition and its complication/manifestation (such as DM with CKD)
- Inappropriately coding acute conditions as chronic

Resources: (1) Up to Date, Thromboembolism from aortic plaque; (2) Up to Date, Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease risk assessment for primary prevention in adults: our approach; (3) Up to Date, Prevention of cardiovascular disease events in those with established disease (secondary prevention) or at very high risk; (4) 2022 ACC/AHA Guideline for the Diagnosis and Management of Aortic Disease

Updated
5/15/2024