

Aortic Atherosclerosis (I70.0)

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

Overview:

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

Query if there is no existing documentation of PAD and not on a statin **and**

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 & Examples:

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