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Maxim Health Information Services (MHIS) provides superior quality [coding and auditing services](#) to healthcare organizations across the country. MHIS offers on-site coding support, remote coding services, auditing and review services, education and training, HIM outsourcing solutions, and services to the Department of Veterans Affairs' Medical Centers. MHIS provides qualified healthcare professionals to customers to meet their needs in an efficient and cost-effective manner. MHIS has some of the best [career opportunities](#) in the industry, with positions including on-site coding, remote coding, travel coding, auditing, and more.

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Welcome to the September issue of Maxim Coding Corner<sup>SM</sup>! As a leader in the HIM industry, [Maxim Health Information Services](#) is committed to providing you with updates on coding-related topics that matter to you. This month, we are focusing on coding of adverse effects vs. poisonings. Read on below to learn more.

### Coding of Adverse Effects vs. Poisonings

#### Adverse Effects vs. Poisonings

An adverse effect occurs when a patient has a reaction or side effect to a drug that has been taken as prescribed. Adverse effects can also be due to a cumulative effect or toxicity of a drug. An adverse effect may also be referred to as allergic reaction, synergistic reaction, or idiosyncratic reaction.

A poisoning occurs when a patient has taken the wrong drug or drug dosage or when a patient correctly takes a therapeutic drug with a non-prescribed drug or with alcohol. A poisoning can also occur when a patient intentionally takes an overdose of a prescribed or non-prescribed drug. *\*Note that a prescribed drug refers to a drug that has been prescribed to the person taking the drug.*

In determining if there was an adverse effect or a poisoning, first determine if the medication was prescribed and administered properly. Second, determine if any other non-prescribed drug or alcohol was taken with the prescribed medication. If the drug was prescribed and administered properly and not taken with any other non-prescribed drugs, then code it as an adverse effect. Otherwise, code it as a poisoning.

#### Coding of Adverse Effects

Coding of adverse effects requires at minimum two codes. First, assign a code or codes for the patient's reaction(s). Next, assign the appropriate code from the E930-E949 categories to identify the drug causing the adverse effect. At times, multiple drugs may be responsible for the patient's reaction. When this occurs, assign an E code for each responsible drug.

Adverse Effect Codes:

1. Reaction(s)
2. E code(s) from E930-E949 for responsible drug(s)

*Adverse Effect Examples:*

**Example 1:** A patient taking Hydrochlorothiazide starts experiencing heart palpitations after taking the medication for two weeks. The patient has taken the medication as prescribed and not taken it with any non-

prescribed medications. Codes: 785.1 & E944.3.

**Example 2:** A patient experiences epistaxis due to Coumadin toxicity. The patient has taken the Coumadin as prescribed. Codes: 784.7 & E934.2.

**Example 3:** A person experiences a seizure due to an interaction between Diuril and Lexapro, both taken as prescribed. Codes: 780.39, E944.3, E939.0.

### **Coding of Poisonings**

A minimum of three codes are required when coding for a poisoning. First, assign the appropriate poisoning code from the 960-979 categories, followed by the codes for the manifestation, and then the appropriate E code. The E code for the poisoning will depend on how the poisoning occurred. Categories E850-E869 are used for accidental poisonings, categories E950-E952 are used when the poisoning was intentional and self-inflicted, categories E961-E962 are used when the poisoning was inflicted by another person, and categories E980-E982 are used when the intent of the poisoning cannot be determined as intentional or accidental.

As with adverse effects, multiple drugs may be responsible for a poisoning. When this is the case, assign multiple codes from categories 960-979 to reflect each responsible drug. Also assign multiple E codes for each responsible drug.

Poisoning Codes:

1. Poisoning code(s) from 960-979
2. Manifestation(s)
3. E code(s) for responsible drug(s)

*Poisoning Examples:*

**Example 1:** A pharmacist accidentally gives a patient 200 mg per day of hydrochlorothiazide instead of 20 mg. After a few days the patient visits his physician's office and is found to be hypotensive. Codes: 974.3, 458.29, E858.5.

**Example 2:** A man intentionally gives his wife hydrochlorothiazide without the wife's knowledge. The wife arrives in the ER with chest pain and palpitations. Codes: 974.3, 786.50, 785.1, E962.0.

**Example 3:** A person takes 50 times the recommended dose of Ibuprofen and drinks six beers in a suicide attempt. He is experiencing chest pain, slurred speech and shortness of breath. Codes: 965.61, 980.0, 786.50, 784.5, 786.05, E950.0, E950.9.

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