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Methodology Report

Reclassification of ICD-9 Codes into Meaningful Categories for Oncology Survivorship Research


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Abstract

Background. The International Classification of Disease, ninth revision (ICD-9) is designed to code disease into categories which are placed into administrative databases. These databases have been used for epidemiological studies. However, the categories used in the ICD-9-codes are not always the most effective for evaluating specific diseases or their outcomes, such as the outcomes of cancer treatment. Therefore a re-classification of the ICD-9 codes into new categories specific to cancer outcomes is needed. Methods. An expert panel comprised of two physicians created broad categories that would be most useful to researchers investigating outcomes and morbidities associated with the treatment of cancer. A Senior Data Coordinator with expertise in ICD-9 coding, then joined this panel and each code was re-classified into the new categories. Results. Consensus was achieved for the categories to go from the 17 categories in ICD-9 to 39 categories. The ICD-9 Codes were placed into new categories, and subcategories were also created for more specific outcomes. The results of this re-classification are available in tabular form. Conclusions. ICD-9 codes were re-classified by group consensus into categories that are designed for oncology survivorship research. The novel re-classification system can be used by those involved in cancer survivorship research.