

Psychoanalyst Services



We have good news and bad news for you.

The bad news: we are sending out our first junk mail. Fear not, we won't send these often, and only if the news is potentially useful to you. If you don't want to ever see one of these again, just let me know by responding to this message and I will make sure you do not.

The good news: ICD-10 has been delayed (again). On April 1, President Obama approved a bill delaying ICD-10 adoption one year to October 1, 2015, the second one-year delay in a row. Once ICD-10 is adopted, every therapist submitting insurance or Medicare claims must use it, which means learning an entirely new set of diagnostic codes.

No doubt you are aware that the diagnostic coding now in use in the United States is ICD-9, the ninth iteration of the "International Classification of Diseases." ICD-9 was established by the World Health Organization in 1975 and a version called ICD-9-CM was adopted in the United States in 1979. ICD-9-CM has about 17,000 distinct codes, of which around 600 involve mental health (300.16 - "Factitious disorder with predominantly psychological signs and symptoms," etc.).

Amazingly, work on ICD-10 started in 1983, only a few years after the adoption of ICD-9. It was approved by WHO in 1990, and was adopted in most of the rest of the world 10 to 20 years ago. WHO asserts that the new coding set is needed to better reflect advances in medical science.

ICD-10-CM, the U.S. version of ICD-10, greatly expands the number of diagnostic codes to close to 70,000, and changes the coding format. For example, the ICD-9-CM example above:

300.16 - Factitious disorder with predominantly psychological signs and symptoms

becomes, in the ICD-10-CM coding:

F68.11 - Factitious disorder with predominantly psychological signs and symptoms

This particular conversion is simple, but the process can be much more complex when a single ICD-9-CM diagnostic code has morphed into multiple ICD-10-CM codes, as is usually the case.

Adoption of ICD-10-CM has lagged in the United States, in part because of the opposition of the American Medical Association, which asserts that the

cost for a small medical practice to upgrade to ICD-10-CM could be as high as \$226,105, an oddly precise figure. For most psychotherapists, converting to ICD-10-CM will probably be much less painful, mainly because advances in psychological science have lagged those of other medical specialties so there have been fewer changes in diagnostic categories.

And, in case you were wondering, work on ICD-11 is already under way, with a final version due in 2017. With luck, we will all be retired by the time it is implemented in this country.