



Improving Data Collection for and Reporting of Opioid Overdose Cases

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Introduction and objectives

Opioid overdose is currently a high-priority health and social issue across Canada. Concern was raised about the potential for under-reporting of opioid overdoses captured using the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Edition, Canada (ICD-10-CA) in hospital administrative databases. The objective of this initiative was to work collaboratively with physicians and the Ontario Ministry of Health to support improved national opioid overdose reporting by ensuring the capture of high-quality and timely opioid data to further advance actionable analysis.

Approach

Analysis of ICD-10-CA coded hospital data highlighted 3 key issues associated with under-reporting: 1) ambiguous clinical documentation in the patient chart; 2) hospital coder data collection challenges; and 3) gaps in the ICD-10-CA classification to identify specific opioids.

A multi-pronged approach was developed to address these issues:

- Education for hospital coders responsible for data collection
- Communication to physicians to improve clinical documentation in the patient record (the source used by coders to assign codes)
- Consultation with external stakeholders to ensure relevant and accurate information related to identifying specific types of opioid overdoses

Addressed data collection challenges

Education for hospital coders

- [Opioid Overdose Coding Direction](#): Provides clarification for coders in hospitals to improve data capture of questionable opioid overdose cases.
- [Opioid Overdose webinar](#): Supports and further explains the coding direction. Currently available as a recording on CIHI's website.

Communication to physicians

[Guidelines to Support Capturing Cases of Opioid Overdose \(Poisoning\)](#): Outlines the dos and don'ts for documentation to support accurate data collection of opioid overdoses. Initially disseminated through physician champion channels and currently available on CIHI's website.



Improved data collection to support high-quality, comparable and actionable information

Enhancements to v2018 ICD-10-CA to support capture of overdoses due to specific types of opioids such as fentanyl and tramadol

T40.40

Poisoning by fentanyl and derivatives

Acrylfentanyl
Alfentanil
Carfentanil
Furanylfentanyl
Sufentanil

T40.41

Poisoning by tramadol

T40.48

Poisoning by other synthetic narcotics, not elsewhere classified

Pethidine

Results

Actions taken to improve opioid data resulted in the following:

- Guidelines for physicians to improve patient chart documentation related to opioid overdose cases
- Clarification for hospital coders to improve data capture of questionable opioid overdose cases
- New direction for hospital coders to improve the coding of opioid overdose cases:
 - Documentation of the administration of an opioid antidote (naloxone [Narcan]) with a positive result in the absence of specific documentation of overdose; and
 - The use of non-physician documentation to confirm a diagnosis of opioid overdose
- Improved specificity available for public reporting due to enhancements in version 2018 ICD-10-CA to identify cases of opioid overdose related to specific types of opioids (e.g., fentanyl, hydromorphone, oxycodone)

Conclusions

Initiatives to improve data collection for opioid overdose cases support national reporting by providing high-quality, comparable and actionable information that can be used to track progress over time. These initiatives can also contribute to decision-making processes by signaling where actions or improvements may be required to support the response to the opioid overdose crisis in Canada.



Opioid-Related Harms in Canada:
CIHI analysis on opioid poisoning hospitalizations released in December 2018



For more information
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