



Connecticut State Medical Society - IPA, Inc.

Building Partnerships Between Business and Medicine

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HISTORY OF PRESENT ILLNESS (HPI)

CMS documentation guidelines state that the HPI must be obtained by the practitioner. The nurse or MA may write down why the patient is being seen, but the practitioner must question the patient and document findings for it to be 'counted' towards the level of the visit. The following are the elements of the HPI:

Location: Where in/on the body the signs/symptoms is occurring.

Examples: area of body, right, left, upper, lower, posterior, anterior, distal, proximal, 3rd digit.

Quality: An adjective qualifier of the type of sign/symptom.

Examples: specific pattern, sharp, dull, throbbing, stabbing, radiating, localized, constant, intermittent, acute, chronic, stable, improving, worsening, laceration as jagged or straight, sore throat as scratchy, cramping, hot, shooting, crushing.

Severity: scale of 1 to 10.

Examples: worst I ever had, improving, slightly, moderate, fell 10 feet, compared to..., the patient feels really well, observation (discomfort, pacing, wincing, favorite site), functional status (partial function, limited activities, immobilizing)

Duration: From what starting point is the onset of the sign or symptom

Examples: onset three days ago, since last Monday, for about 2 months, in the last 2 weeks, yesterday, until today.

Timing: Indication of the number of occurrences or frequency of the sign/symptom or when the pain/symptom occurs.

Examples: recurrent, comes and goes, continuous, never really goes away, seldom, frequently, time of day, pattern (worsens or improves), daily constant, intermittent, sporadic, frequent, 30 minutes after..., at night, after meals, etc.

Context: Circumstances causing or surrounding the event of the sign/symptom.

Examples: how a complaint occurred (injuries incurred in MVA, tripped up steps, at recreational ballgame)

Modifying Factor: Steps the patient has taken to alleviate the symptoms, what exacerbates symptoms, what helped, what didn't help.

Examples: when I took ___ it went away, it's better if I lie down, putting ice on it helped, associated with activity (meals, exercise, stress, medication), aggravated by activity, improves with activity, stress relationship,

Associated Signs/Symptoms: Other signs/symptoms patient is experiencing.

Examples: chest pain leads to shortness of breath, DM w/weakness, hunger pain, headache w/blurry vision, generalized symptoms (constitutional) chills, fever, headaches, weakness, exhaustion, pertinent positives & negatives, bowel changes with blood in stool.