

ICD-10-CM Documentation and Coding Best Practices Substance Use Disorders and DSM-5

In the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), the American Society of Addiction Medicine created a category called “**Substance Use Disorders**.” This category combines the concepts of “*substance abuse*” and “*substance dependence*” into a single disorder, measured on a continuum from mild to severe.

A. Diagnostic Criteria for Substance Use Disorders

DSM-5 defines substance use disorder as a problematic pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by *at least two* of the following occurring in a 12-month period:

DSM-5 Criteria for Substance Use Disorders

1. Substance is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period of time than was intended
2. Persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control substance use
3. Great deal of time spent in activities to obtain the substance, use the substance, or recover from its effects
4. Craving or strong desire to use the substance
5. Recurrent use resulting in failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, home
6. Continued substance use despite persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems
7. Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of substance use
8. Recurrent substance use in situations in which it is physically hazardous
9. Substance use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by the substance
10. Tolerance, as defined by either of the following:
 - a. A need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve desired effect
 - b. A markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of substance
11. Withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following:
 - a. Characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance
 - b. Use of the substance or closely related substance is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms

Note: Symptoms of **tolerance and withdrawal** occurring in the context of appropriate medical treatment with prescribed medications (e.g., opioid analgesics, sedatives, stimulants) are specifically **not counted** when diagnosing a substance use disorder. Furthermore, the DSM states:

“The appearance of normal, expected pharmacological tolerance and withdrawal during the course of medical treatment has been known to lead to an erroneous diagnosis of “addiction,” even when these were the only symptoms present.”

B. Severity of Substance Use Disorders

Mild: Presence of 2-3 symptoms

Moderate: Presence of 4-5 symptoms

Severe: Presence of 6 or more symptoms



C. Remission, Controlled Environment & Maintenance Therapy

Remission occurs when an individual with the disorder has met *none* of the criteria for substance use disorder (except craving) for at least three months. Remission is divided into:

- ❖ **Early remission:** ≥3 to <12 months without meeting substance use disorders criteria (except craving)
- ❖ **Sustained remission:** ≥12 months without meeting substance use disorders criteria (except craving)

Remission can be further specified as:

- ❖ **“In a controlled environment”** – When the individual in remission is in a supervised residential setting where access to alcohol and controlled substances is restricted
- ❖ **“On maintenance therapy”** – When the individual in remission is being maintained on a prescribed medication (e.g., agonist, partial agonist, agonist/antagonist, or full antagonist)

I. Substance Use Disorders and ICD-10-CM

Unlike DSM-5, ICD-10-CM continues to employ the concepts of “*substance abuse*” and “*substance dependence*.”

Substance abuse represents a maladaptive pattern of drug-taking, which may include detriments to social functioning, to physical well-being and/or to mental health in patients who have not yet reached a state of physical dependence.

Substance dependence is defined as a chronic mental and physical condition related to the patient's pattern of drug-taking that is characterized by behavioral and physiological responses, which may include:

- A compulsion to take the drug in order to experience its psychic effects, or to avoid the discomfort of its absence
- An inability to stop the use of the drug despite strong incentives
- **Physical dependence** (i.e., tolerance and withdrawal)

Documentation Guidance

When documenting substance use disorders, include the following:

- ✓ Severity – mild, moderate, etc.
- ✓ Pattern of use – continuous use, in remission, relapsed, etc.
- ✓ Substance-induced mood/psychotic symptoms – depression, hallucinations, anxiety, etc.
- ✓ Current presentation – intoxication, drunkenness, withdrawal
- ✓ Treatment plan – rehabilitation, maintenance therapy (specify drug), AA, etc.

Coding Guidance

- *Substance use disorders* – The “substance use disorders” of DSM-5 are reported in ICD-10 as follows:

<u>DSM-5 Diagnosis</u>		<u>ICD-10 Category</u>
Substance use disorder, mild	→	Substance abuse
Substance use disorder, moderate	→	Substance dependence
Substance use disorder, severe	→	Substance dependence

- *Substance use, abuse, and dependence* – When use, abuse and dependence of the same substance are documented in the encounter note, only one code should be assigned based on the following hierarchy:

<u>If...</u>		<u>Then report...</u>
Both use and abuse are documented	→	Abuse
Both abuse and dependence are documented	→	Dependence
Use, abuse and dependence are documented	→	Dependence
Both use and dependence are documented	→	Dependence



Coding Guidance cont.

- *Drug dependence in context of appropriate medical treatment* – Physical dependence (i.e., tolerance and withdrawal) can develop with the chronic use of many drugs: this can include prescription drugs, even if taken as instructed. ICD-10-CM does not distinguish between this normal, expected response and other forms of drug dependence. Any type of drug dependency (i.e., prescribed, non-prescribed [illicit], physiological and/or behavioral) is coded similarly.

