

SPONDYLOSIS

Background

This case definition was developed by the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center (AFHSC) for the purpose of epidemiological surveillance of a condition important to military-associated populations. In the military, work-related injuries account for significant lost work time, health care costs, and disability compensation.¹

Clinical Description

Spondylosis, sometimes referred to as degenerative osteoarthritis, or osteoarthritic spine disease, typically occurs in later life and primarily involves the cervical and lumbosacral spine. Patients often complain of back pain that is increased by motion and associated with stiffness or limitation of motion. Pain may be prominent when x-ray findings are minimal; alternatively, large osteophytes may be seen in asymptomatic patients. If severe, the condition may cause pressure on nerve roots and spinal stenosis.²

Case Definition and Incidence Rules

For surveillance purposes, a case of spondylosis is defined as:

- *One hospitalization* with any of the defining diagnoses of spondylosis (see ICD9 code list below) in *any* diagnostic position; or
- *Two outpatient medical encounters*, occurring *within two years* of each other, with any of the defining diagnoses of spondylosis (see ICD9 code list below) in *any* diagnostic position.

Incidence rules:

For individuals who meet the case definition:

- The incidence date is considered the date of the first hospitalization or outpatient medical encounter that includes a defining diagnosis of spondylosis.
- An individual is considered an incident case only *once per lifetime*.

Exclusions:

- None

¹ Feuerstein M, Berkowitz SM, Peck CA. Musculoskeletal-related disability in US Army personnel: prevalence, gender and military occupational specialties. *J Occup Environ Med.* 1997 Jan;39(1):68-78.

² Braunwald, E., Fauci, A., Longo, D. et al. 2008. *Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine.* 17th ed. United States: McGraw-Hill Professional.



Codes

The following ICD9 codes are included in the case definition:

Condition	ICD-9-CM codes	CPT Codes
Spondylosis	721.0 (cervical spondylosis without myelopathy) 721.1 (cervical spondylosis with myelopathy) 721.2 (thoracic spondylosis without myelopathy) 721.3 (lumbosacral spondylosis without myelopathy) 721.4 (thoracic or lumbar spondylosis with myelopathy) - 721.41(thoracic region) - 721.42 (lumbar region) 721.5 (kissing spine) 721.6 (ankylosing vertebral hyperostosis) 721.7 (traumatic spondylopathy) 721.8 (other allied disorders of spine) 721.9 (spondylosis of unspecified site) - 721.90 (without mention of myelopathy) - 721.91 (with myelopathy)	NA

Development and Revisions

- The case definition was developed by Medical Surveillance Monthly Report (MSMR) staff for use in a MSMR article.³ The case definition was developed based on reviews of the ICD9 codes, the scientific literature, and previous AFHSC report requests.

Case Definition and Incidence Rule Rationale

- The symptoms of spondylosis present over time and health care providers may include the condition in the differential diagnosis for an individual prior to making a definitive diagnosis. As such, the case definition requires two outpatient visits to confirm a true case.

Code Set Determination and Rationale

- The ICD9 codes 721.xx were included to use all possible descriptions and sequelae unique to spondylosis.

Reports

None

³ Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center. Osteoarthritis and Spondylosis, Active Component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2000-2009. *Medical Surveillance Monthly Report (MSMR)*. 2010 December; Vol 17 (12): 6-11.



Review

Mar 2011 Case definition reviewed and adopted by AFHSC Surveillance Methods and Standards (SMS) working group.

Dec 2010 Case definition developed and reviewed by MSMR staff.

Comments

None

