Sick Sinus Syndrome (SSS)
Sick of trying to figure out when to code SSS?

Per Mayo Clinic, sick sinus syndrome (SSS) is the name for a group of heart arrhythmias in which the sinus node, the heart’s natural pacemaker, doesn’t work properly. Sick sinus syndrome is also known as sinus node disease or sinus node dysfunction. The sinus node is an area of specialized cells located in the upper right chamber of the heart controlling the heart’s rhythm. A person with SSS has abnormally paced signals causing the heart’s rhythm to be too fast, too slow, contain pauses, or a combination of all three rhythm complications.

Coding SSS
SSS is reported with ICD-9 code 427.81 (HCC 2013 92/HCC 2014 96). It is appropriate to code for a diagnosis of SSS when attention to, or treatment for, the condition is documented in the medical record: ordered or reviewed an ECG, Rx management, referral to cardiologist, scheduled pacemaker implantation, etc.

Artificial Pacemaker
Most people with SSS will eventually need a permanent artificial pacemaker in order for their heart to maintain regular rhythm. An artificial cardiac pacemaker is defined as a medical device that uses electrical impulses, delivered by electrodes contracting the heart muscles, to regulate the beating of the heart. There have been questions raised regarding whether or not to code for SSS with a previously installed pacemaker.

Coding Clinic
Per Coding Clinic, Fifth Issue, 1993, “Although it can be argued that SSS is an ongoing condition controlled by a pacemaker, no code assignment is required if no attention or treatment is provided to the condition or device. This differs from the ongoing medication administration provided for conditions such as congestive heart failure, hypertension or diabetes mellitus, and therefore, justifying code assignment. The use of code V45.0, cardiac pacemaker in situ is optional; some facilities will want to code for the presence of the device for tracking purposes. Use of code V45.0 does not imply management of the pacemaker, only its presence.” Given this advice, do not assign a code for SSS unless there is documentation of attention or treatment aimed at the condition.

ICD-10 Mapping
The table below demonstrates the ICD-9 to ICD-10 code mapping of SSS and pacemaker status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICD-9 Code</th>
<th>ICD-10 Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>427.81</td>
<td>I49.5 Sick sinus syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>V45.0</td>
<td>Z95.0 Presence of cardiac pacemaker</td>
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