

Definitions and Examples of the Elements of MDM

Last Modified on 03/14/2022 3:40 pm EDT

Use the tabs below to review the definition of each element of MDM and some examples.

Problem Count/Complexity

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See: [At-A-Glance: OP to AMA Problem Status Crosswalk](#)

Data Count/Complexity

Data Count/Complexity: Definitions and Examples

Data Count/Complexity	Definition
Test	Tests are imaging, laboratory, psychometric, or physiologic data. A clinical laboratory panel (example: basic metabolic panel [80047]) is a single test. The differentiation between single or multiple unique tests is defined in accordance w/ the CPT code set.
External physician or other qualified healthcare professional	An external physician or other QHP who is not in the same group practice or is a different specialty or subspecialty. It includes licensed professionals that are practicing independently. It may also be a facility or organizational provider such as a hospital, nursing facility, or home health care agency.
Independent historian(s)	An individual (such as: parent, guardian, surrogate, witness) who provides a history in addition to a history provided by the patient who is unable to provide a complete or reliable history (due to developmental stage) or because a confirmatory history is judged to be necessary.
Independent Interpretation	Test for which there is a CPT code and an interpretation or report is customary. Excludes when the physician or other QHP is reporting the service or has previously reported the service for the patient. Documentation is required, but need not conform to the usual standards of a complete report for the test.
Appropriate source	An appropriate source includes professionals who are not health care professionals, but may be involved in the management of the patient (examples: lawyer, case manager, teacher). Excludes discussion w/ family or informal caregivers.

Examples of MDM Level Based on Data Review

Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 y/o patient: Mom historian, no tests 17 y/o patient: Ordered CBC, comprehensive metabolic panel (outside lab) 9 y/o patient: Ordered strep test, influenza test (in-office)
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 y/o patient: Ordered CBC, T4, TSH (outside lab) 2 y/o patient: Spoke w/ Hem-Onc physician to discuss recent labs and course of treatment 6 y/o patient: Reviewed radiologic result from ED and wrote own interpretation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 y/o patient: Dad independent historian, ordered EKG and 2-D Echo, spoke w/ cardiologist about

Extensive	<p>appropriate course for patient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 y/o patient: Ordered 2 behavioral assessments, spoke w/ both parents as independent historians, spoke w/ referring school counselor regarding initial assessment and plan • 12 y/o patient: Mom was historian to discuss black-out episode, independent interpretation of MRI done during ED visit, ordered 3 additional labs
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Risk of Complications and/or Morbidity/Mortality

Risk of Complications and/or Morbidity/Mortality: Definitions and Examples	
Risk of Complications	Definition
Risk	The probability and/or consequences of an event. Definitions of risk are based upon the usual behavior and thought processes of a physician or other QHP in the same specialty. For the purposes of MDM, level of risk is based upon consequences of the problem(s) addressed at the encounter when appropriately treated. Risk also includes MDM related to the need to initiate or forego further testing, treatment and/or hospitalization.
Morbidity	A state of illness or functional impairment that is expected to be of substantial duration during which function is limited, quality of life is impaired, or there is organ damage that may not be transient despite treatment.
Social determinants of health	Economic and social conditions that influence the health of people and communities. Examples may include food or housing insecurity.
Drug therapy requiring intensive monitoring for toxicity	A drug that requires intensive monitoring is a therapeutic agent that has the potential to cause serious morbidity or death. Intensive monitoring may be long- or short term. Long-term intensive monitoring is not less than quarterly. The monitoring needs to be a lab test, a physiologic test or imaging. The monitoring affects the level of MDM in an encounter in which it is considered in the management of the patient.

Examples of MDM Level Based on Risk	
Minimal**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive care at home, such as: gargle, topical OTC ointment • Swab for further lab testing
Low**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood draw for labs • Radiologic tests such as EKGs, x-rays
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New prescription drug for acute condition • Ongoing management of chronic condition through prescription management • Decision to perform minor surgery (Must be manually adjusted in Coding) • Homelessness exacerbating patient's condition (Housing Insecurity; SDoH) • Income issues leading to under-dosing a medication (Health Literacy; SDoH)
Extensive**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug therapy requiring intensive monitoring for toxicity

**** OP will not support calculating this Risk Level**