

Watch out for ROS that isn't really ROS

When auditing medical records, especially in a high volume setting, it is important to be sure that you award credit for what truly constitutes a review of systems (ROS) instead of just Past Medical History. Today, many physicians use patient questionnaires or checklists provided by office staff, and not all of the items on those forms meet the criteria for ROS.

As an example, a form that simply asks the patient to check a box indicating whether they have a history of diabetes is not a review of that system, but rather an element of past medical history. The same is true for questions related to asthma.

The review of systems is a technique used by healthcare providers to elicit further dialogue from a patient about his/her medical history. The ROS is a tool to help identify conditions in the patient. Questions should be about specific symptoms and not previously diagnosed medical conditions.

Another common pitfall for ROS is relying on electronic health record (EHR) features to identify the system rather than scrutinizing the actual entry made. For example, edema is a cardiovascular system assessment, yet many EHR's list it under the integumentary or even the musculoskeletal system.

As auditors, it is our job to review records and ensure that the documentation supports what is billed. Be mindful that you are giving credit where credit is due for the review of systems documentation.

This Week's Tip Provided by:

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