



Targeting Patient Outcomes: Increasing Accuracy of Documentation

Melissa Kolod, BS, Cynthia Lundberg, MSN, RN, Jennifer Kingery, BSN, RN

Accurate documentation of patient-centered outcomes is necessary for data aggregation of valid and reliable patient care outcome studies across the continuum of care. From a terminology standpoint, this requires a consistent and unambiguous methodology for documenting outcomes at the point of care. Intelligent Medical Objects, Inc. (IMO) is in the process of creating a sound outcome dictionary that will support research and analysis of clinical quality measures for Meaningful use Stage II. IMO's Care Outcome domain is comprised of both outcomes and outcome indicators. When outcomes are reviewed from electronic health records (EHR), interpretation is complex. Outcomes are to be patient-centered and measurable over a length of time. Furthermore, they should be written as goals, or expected outcomes, rather than achieved outcomes. Assessing outcomes presents two new challenges to terminologists. First, the outcome may be performed on behalf of the patient or by the patient personally. Second, very similar desired outcomes may entail different interventions. Two related outcome examples are "minimize fall risk" and "fall risk will be minimized". The interventions completed for the outcome of "fall risk will be minimized" may be completed by the nurse alone, whereas the interventions for the outcome of "minimize fall risk" will be completed only by the patient. The challenge is to understand the context and interpretations of each outcome depending on who is performing the interventions leading up to it. Capturing the context in documentation at the point of care will improve data collection for outcomes research and advance clinical knowledge to improve patient care. IMO, through the development of their outcome dictionary, is encouraging users of the outcome domain to identify and utilize the distinctions between indicators to improve research initiatives. Using IMO's outcome domain can assist healthcare organizations to demonstrate achievement of the National Quality Forum (NQF) measures. For example, NQF measure 0101, Falls: Screening, Risk-Assessment, and Plan of Care to Prevent Future Falls, may be reached through documentation of the appropriate patient outcomes. Specifically, the Plan of Care for Falls rate may be accounted for in EHRs with use of outcomes such as "able to return home to safe environment", "knowledge of fall prevention", and "fall risk will be minimized". These goals once achieved will improve the care of patients throughout their health care continuum. Evidence of the effects of this outcome approach has yet to be seen. IMO is still developing the outcome domain and will review the actual use case of the information in the near future. The focus of this presentation will be to describe the process of reviewing outcome indicators and demonstrate the methods used to create the outcome domain. The presentation will also discuss the effect this dictionary will have on patient-centered care. IMO's outcome domain will provide more reliable, valuable, and measurable outcome indicators by filling in identified gaps in outcome terminology.