

Clinical Documentation Improvement Education : Syncope



- **Syncope** is a clinical syndrome in which transient loss of consciousness is caused by a period of inadequate cerebral blood flow, most often the result of an abrupt drop in systemic BP

➤ Etiology

- Most cases of syncope are the result of benign orthostatic hypotension, vasovagal response, and emotional stress.
- There is a sharp increase in occurrence after the age of 70
- However, syncope can be the harbinger of a dangerous life-threatening condition
- Syncope deserves thorough investigation and appropriate treatment of its cause

➤ Documentation

- Syncope without a diagnostic etiology is just a symptom so a suspected cause must be clearly documented:
- **Syncope due to** (likely, probable, possible)
 - **Cardiac** : Arrhythmia, Cardiomyopathy, Heart Failure, Aortic Dissection PE, Cardiovascular drug-induced syncope (specify drug), High-degree AV-block or any documented cardiac pause, Aortic Stenosis
 - **Hypotension**: Persistently low systolic blood pressure (less than 90) or pulse less than 60 during initial presentation, orthostatic Hypotension
 - **Drug/ Alcohol** Effect (Specify drug and effect)
 - **Anemia** (Specify type and acuity)
 - **Neurogenic**: Autonomic Imbalance due to aging, Parkinson's, Diabetic neuropathy, Vaso- Vagal Neurogenic Response
 - **Misc.** cause: Dehydration, Electrolyte imbalances, Hypoglycemia, Psychogenic

- Ref.: <https://www.merckmanuals.com>, <https://icd.codes/> 2018 Engel, Ann Int Med 1978
- American Family Physician <https://www.aafp.org/> Sept 2011, <https://acphospitalist.org> Richard Pinson MD
- Benditt, D, MD UptoDate Syncope in Adults, Epidemiology, Pathogenesis and Etiologies,UptoDate Nov 15, 2018
- Pinzon, R and Tang, C. [2018 CDI Pocket Guide](#)

Syncope Alternatives": "possible" "probable"

