



OA Employee Spotlight



**Ngozi
Okafor**
CPC, CPC-H
Coding
Consultant

I've always thought of myself as a success story, considering what life was like growing up in Enugu, Nigeria. I'm the first of seven children – five daughters and two sons – born at a time when the birth of a female child was an indication of failure. Due to this reason, my father was constantly reminded of how much a failure he was for not having an eldest male child. However, he maintained, "Male child or not, this Ngozi my daughter will remain a blessing to my family and will be the best among equals."

Prior to immigrating to the United States in 1999, I was a Research and Development Manager with Hoechst Nigeria Plc, a German chemical company with operations in several countries around the world. I hold a bachelor of science degree in industrial chemistry and an associate degree in pre-medicine. Coming from a family of physicians and nurses is the main reason I wanted to become a medical coder.

I made the transition to contract coding after five years with Emory University School of Medicine, due to the flexibility therein and ability to multitask. I felt that I needed to do better and have wider opportunities, and it's really been a blessing since I took this bold step.

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Does Thanksgiving Turkey Make You Sleepy?

By Rafaella

Thanksgiving is all about tradition. The day is just not complete without enjoying a massively indulgent meal with family, followed by several dazed hours on the sofa. The post-meal laziness that overcomes over-eaters is so widespread that it has become as much a tradition as the turkey itself, leading many Americans to wonder if the two aren't related.

Tryptophan is a word that comes up in every household on Thanksgiving Day. There is usually at least one sagely aunt or uncle who proposes that their post-meal inertia comes from the high concentration of this chemical in turkey meat. Tryptophan, we are told, makes us tired, and turkey supposedly has high quantities of it. But although tryptophan is a real chemical that is found in turkey and it does relate to your body's production of serotonin (a brain chemical that makes you feel relaxed), the amount found in turkey is not enough to have a sleepy effect on us.

Contrary to Thanksgiving myth, tryptophan is not the real reason you feel like snoring halfway through your second slice of apple pie. In fact, maybe you should take a closer look at that pie you're eating. And the stuffing. And the potatoes. And the chips you snacked on before the meal. Turkey gets blamed for making us sluggish on this day of indulgence because it

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ASK THE EXPERT!

What is Achalasia?

Achalasia "failure to relax" (also known as esophageal achalasia, achalasia cardiae, cardiospasm, and esophageal aperistalsis) is a rare (1 in every 100,000 people) disorder of the muscle of the esophagus that carries food from the mouth to the stomach, which affects the ability of the esophagus to move food toward the stomach.

Two major features of the disorder include: (a) the muscles that line the esophagus do not contract normally, so that swallowed food is not propelled through the esophagus into the stomach properly, and (b) the lower esophageal sphincter (LES), a band of muscle that encircles the lower portion of the esophagus, does not function correctly. The etiology of this issue is degenerative damage to the nerves of the esophagus (this aspect of the disease process is currently unknown and not well understood).

Treatment for this condition targets attempts at relaxation of the lower esophageal sphincter muscles and may consist of:

- Drug therapy/medications, using long-acting nitrates or calcium channel blockers
- Injection with botulinum toxin
- EGD (esophagogastroduodenoscopy) dilation of the esophagus at the location of the narrowing or stricture
- Esophagomyotomy, a surgical procedure





Set the Record Straight with *On Assignment*

Health Information
Management

OA Employee of the Month

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Brian Lasch

Director of
Recruitment Services
HIM Contract Team

Hello everyone, it's a pleasure to be able to share my bio with you. It's been several years since I shared my last bio in this newsletter, which goes

to show how much our team has grown! I've been busy in the past few years, and the most important and exciting update is that my wife and I had our first child on July 6, 2011. My photo above with my wife Lauren and daughter Madeline was just taken this past weekend. This past October was my three-year wedding anniversary, seven-year anniversary with On Assignment, and I became a homeowner.

Even though I live in San Diego it all started for me on the East Coast. I was born and raised in Norwich, Connecticut. How did I end up on the opposite coast? One of the reasons is that I love to travel and see new places. The other (and the most important one) is that New England winters can be a bit arduous.

Those cold New England winters I spoke of originally led me to Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. It was very exciting to immerse myself in a new culture as well as have a mild winter. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in biology and environmental studies.

So, since I had spent time in the Northeast and the Southeast, it was time for something new. The next part of my journey was out West to San Diego. This came about by visiting a friend there during college. In the short time I was there, I fell in love with the city, weather, people, etc. and decided this was the place for me. Once I finished college, I packed up the car and hit the road for the West Coast. After I arrived, I began working for a healthcare staffing company in a division that focused on the nurse staffing industry. After I spent two years there, I was able to sign on with On Assignment HIM and I could not be happier. We care about our clients and employees, not just the bottom line. "People First" is how we conduct our business, which is rare to find in this industry.

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For information regarding our \$500 referral bonus program, please email

kristin.walsh@onassignment.com

I'm delighted to be a member of On Assignment HIM, an organization that recognizes and rewards excellence. The opportunity I've gained as a professional coder cannot be overemphasized. As a contract coder I've had the opportunity to take many travel assignments. I've traveled to several states in the United States. In fact, I'm constantly reminded of my previous Hoechst training that took me to Germany and Russia. It's been a pleasure working with different people, and speaking and understanding a little bit of French, Dutch, and Russian as well as two native Nigerian languages. Medical coding has also exposed me to in-depth computer information systems and different technologies.

In my spare time, I'm involved in community organizations, and mentoring unemployed youths and adults on career change as well as immigrants who cannot speak English. I've mentored and funded full tuition for over 10 young men and women to avail them the immense opportunities in medical coding. These youths stem from people I ran into in grocery stores, churches, and shelters where I support the less privileged through a nonprofit organization, "Open Door Family Services."

I'm very proud to be a contract coding consultant as this has given me the opportunity to meet people and travel far and wide as well as take care of family responsibilities in this hard economy. I will always be grateful to On Assignment HIM and my recruiter, Bryan Seshun.



DID YOU KNOW?

Tetrachromats are organisms with a four dimensional and independent channel for conveying and perceiving color information. Most birds possess this ability, and some species of arachnids, insects, amphibians, reptiles, and fish are believed to have this ability. There has been a suggestion that a potential variation of the classical genes responsible for cone cell pigments on the X chromosome may give a small percentage of human females partial to full tetrachromatic ability. If true, these individuals would tend to have a significantly enhanced perception of color differentiation.

<http://discovermagazine.com/2012/jul-aug/06-humans-with-super-human-vision>

<http://theness.com/neurologicablog/index.php/tetrachromacy-in-humans/>

<http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/news/health/some-women-may-see-100-million-colors-thanks-to-their-genes-450179/>

<http://neuronresearch.net/vision/files/tetrachromat.htm>

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When I'm not at work, I enjoy spending time with my family, sports (both playing and watching), running with my dog, good conversation, relaxing, and traveling. I work with an incredible team of hard-working and dedicated colleagues, and I love my daily interactions with all of my consultants. It's very unique to have a job where you build such strong relationships, even though you rarely meet someone face-to-face. It is because of all this that time has flown by, and I've enjoyed every second of it. I want to thank all of our current consultants and our internal team of Recruiters and Account Executives for the excellent work they do, and I look forward to meeting and working with more people in the future!

ICD-10 Corner

With the addition of many combination codes within the ICD-10-CM code set, will we see a loss of cc's that we currently have within the ICD-9-CM code set, in essence, decreasing our facility's reimbursement to a lower-weighted DRG?

I understand your concerns, but have no fear. Those new combination codes – which include codes that are currently cc's – have already been recognized and will calculate the DRG appropriately. To illustrate, see how the following scenario compares:

ICD-9		ICD-10	
Dx	562.11 Diverticulitis 569.5 Sigmoid abscess (cc)	Dx	K57.20 Diverticulitis of large intestine with perforation and abscess without bleeding
Px	17.36 Laparoscopic Sigmoid Resection	Px	0DBN4ZZ Excision of Sigmoid Colon, Percutaneous Endoscopic Approach
DRG	330 Major Small and Large Bowel Procedures w CC		
APR - DRG	221 Maj Small & Large Bowel Proc		

However, I would be remiss if I didn't point out that the potential loss of reimbursement will more likely result from a lack of specific documentation needed by the coder to capture appropriate ICD-10 codes, resulting in the overuse of unspecified codes. Performing I-10 focused reviews to detect and highlight these problem areas will be vital. Use the data discovered to provide feedback to your physicians to correct the documentation issues during the upcoming months and follow up on their compliance. Contact your On Assignment account manager to schedule a ICD-10 compliance audit at your facility.

Do you have an ICD-10 related question? Contact Vicki at vweinert@torionit.com and you just might see your topic discussed in the next issue of Set the Record Straight.



Set the Record Straight with *On Assignment*Health Information
Management**? WHO KNOWS ?****What are the ICD-10 codes for this scenario?**

Patient is admitted with severe abdominal pain through the emergency room, and found to have cholelithiasis and choledocolithiasis with both acute and chronic cholecystitis. The patient is subsequently converted to an inpatient stay and a laparoscopic cholecystectomy with intraoperative cholangiogram (using other contrast) is performed successfully.

Send your answers to:

kristin.walsh@onassignment.com

All correct answers will be put into a raffle for a chance to win a \$25 gift card from On Assignment HIM!

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rarely makes a dinner table appearance at any other time of the year, but the truth of our tiredness lies in the carbohydrates.

Tryptophan is actually found in plenty of other proteins, such as chicken, fish, and eggs – and you've never heard anybody blame their omelet for making them want to nap. The fact is, our beloved Thanksgiving meal involves so much more than turkey – it involves large quantities of carbohydrate-heavy foods, which take a lot of energy for our body to digest.

This article can be found at:

[http://www.venere.com/blog/thanksgiving-turkey-11320/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+veneretravelblog+\(Venere+Travel+Blog\)](http://www.venere.com/blog/thanksgiving-turkey-11320/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+veneretravelblog+(Venere+Travel+Blog))

**October 2012 ?WHO KNOWS?**

Unfortunately we did not receive a correct response to last month's question.

Answers:

121.4, 125.10, 125.2, 110, E78.0, E11.9, Z82.49, 02703DZ, 4A023N7, B200YZZ, B205YZZ



People First.

On Assignment[®]
Health Information
Management

Certified Tumor Registrar (CTR)

On Assignment Health Information Management offers cost-effective staffing solutions for the management and utilization of patient data, ensuring its timely availability. We assist healthcare organizations in meeting their operational goals by providing qualified **Certified Tumor Registrar** consultants for contract, contract-to-hire, and direct hire positions.

We recruit experienced **CTR** professionals credentialed by the **National Cancer Registrars Association (NCRA)** who are able to:

- Accurately review and abstract health information from patient medical records such as demographic characteristics, history of neoplasm, final diagnosis stage, extent of disease (metastasis), and treatment (diagnostic and surgical procedures, administration of chemotherapy, radiation therapy, biological response modifiers, etc.), and assign mandated oncology codes – entering data into a cancer registry database to allow for uniform data collection.
- Prepare statistical reports, narrative reports, and graphic presentations of tumor registry data for use by hospital staff, researchers, and other users of registry data.
- Maintain registry with follow-up information such as quality of life and length of survival of cancer patients.
- Maintain and manage an effective cancer registry program (including the management and supervision of subordinate registry staff) at either a local, state, or national level.

Many of our CTR professionals are recruited from institutions with ACoS approved cancer programs, and are familiar with SEER.

Contact us:
800.364.4260
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