Belgium: from ICD-9-CM to ICD-10-CM/PCS - how a hospital prepares

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Introduction
Measurement of a hospital's case-mix was until the end of 2014 done in Belgium with ICD-9-CM. Since the first of January 2015 however ICD-10-CM/PCS has become obligatory for all hospitals. However, since the government realized just how enormous the task ahead is, 2015 will be a transition period. Hospitals need to send their MZG (minimal hospital data) on time, but ICD-10-CM/PCS codes may be substituted with dummy codes if not all data can be collected. Also, data from 2015 will not be used for financing. Hospitals which have fallen behind and don't deliver their data in a timely fashion anymore, will be using this "extra time" to catch up.

The C.H.R. de la Citadelle, one of the larger hospitals in Belgium, was able to keep the deadlines in the past, and now has a full year to perform the necessary preparatory steps. One of these steps was the coding of our hospital stays from January 2015 in ICD-10-CM/PCS and evaluate the quality of the collected data.

Methods
Hospital stays from January 2015 (ICD-10-CM/PCS) and January 2014 (ICD-9-CM) were grouped with APR-DRG v31. Different parameters were compared: Severity of Illness, Risk of Mortality, distribution between Major Diagnostic Categories, distribution in MDC's between Medical and Surgical cases and Data Quality Edits.

Results
Distribution of SoI, RoM and MDC showed minor shifts in the two observed periods. However a major shift was observed between medical and surgical DRG's in most MDC's. Also Data Quality Edits increased significantly

Conclusions
Problems were detected in multiple area's: selection of principal/secondary diagnostics, quality and detail of discharge letters and of course software used. But the main problem was found to be in the correct attribution of procedure codes. This has led to massive shifts in the case-mix of January 2015 (which luckily will not be used). Off course, this is just part of the first PDCA-cycle. Coding of procedures will need to improve before the end of the year.

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