

Numbering and Filing Systems

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Much of the information in this mini-lecture was previously discussed in the Essentials of Health Records course.

Number and Filing Systems

Most healthcare facilities file their health records with a numeric filing system. There are three types of numerical filing systems that are utilized in healthcare; straight or consecutive numeric filing, terminal digit or reverse, and middle digit.

The straight filing system is also referred to as the consecutive filing system. Patient records are filed in strict chronological order according to patient number from lowest to highest.

An example would be:

123451, 123452, 123453, and then 123454

It is a common practice that medical record numbers contain six digits. The six digits are then further subdivided into three parts by the use of a hyphen, thus making it easier to read. For example, rather than reading 123451; you would read 12-34-51. The three subdivided sections are labeled as primary, secondary, and tertiary. The primary section is the first section in this case, it would be 12. The secondary section is 34, and the tertiary is the last section on the right, which would be 51.

The second numeric system is terminal digit filing system. The terminal digit filing system is also referred to as the reverse numeric filing system. The terminal system is opposite of the straight numeric. For example, medical record number 01-02-89, 89 is now considered the primary section, 02 is still the secondary section, and 01 is the tertiary section.

The third numeric system is the middle digit filing system. In the middle digit system the middle digit is the primary section, the digits on the left are now in the secondary section, and the digits on the right are in the tertiary section. For example, medical record number 01-08-49, 08 is now considered the primary section, 01 is the secondary section, and 49 is the tertiary section.

Assigning Pseudo Numbers

The Veterans Administration Medical Center utilizes the use of social security numbering as the patient's medical record number. If a patient does not have a social security number, a pseudo number is assigned. It is important to note that the pseudo number has the same format as the social security number 000-00-000. Here are the rules for assigning pseudo numbers –

You will need to use the following information to assign a pseudo number to a patient:

abc = 1

def = 2

ghi = 3

jkl = 4
mno = 5
pqr = 6
stu = 7
vwx = 8
yz = 9

First you will need to use the letter/number grid that I just gave you to assign a number to the first letter of the patient's first, middle, and last name. If the patient has no middle initial, you will assign a "0." Secondly, you will use the patient's date of birth. You will use two digits for the month, date, and year. Enter a "0" before the one-digit months and days. My initials are 'SEC' and my birth date is 01.14.73; so my number would be 721-01-1473.

Calculating Record Storage Requirements

The next important area we need to discuss is how to calculate record storage for the paper based medical record. Be sure to use the following guidelines:

First, determine the current linear filing inches used to store records.

Second, estimate the linear filing inches needed for the time period during which records will be stored, such as a five-year period.

Third, calculate the linear filing inches provided by the shelving units.

And the last step is to convert the linear filing inches to the number of shelving units to be purchased.

Let's review an example on how this works:

We have 15 shelving units with 50 linear filing inches per shelf. The facility has 15,000 current records. The facility needs 10,000 inches for future use.

$$15 \times 50 = 750$$

$$15,000 + 10,000 = 25,000$$

$25,000 / 750 = 33.33$ units – it is important to note that you will always need to round up as there is no such thing as 33.33 units.

The correct answer is 34 units.