



IMPORTANT NOTICE

26 May 2005

Modification of the ProQA® Age/Gender Fast Track Feature

The Academy recently conducted a data study regarding the correct entry of Chief Complaint-related information in the “What’s the problem, tell me exactly what happened?” field of ProQA. A review of several thousand cases indicated that the *fast track* entry of Age/Gender (i.e., 42yom) in this field appears to degrade the process of consistently obtaining and recording accurate Chief Complaint information. A comparison of cases in which the Age/Gender fast track feature was used, to those in which it was not, showed the following results on Protocol 26—a protocol that relies heavily on the correct identification of the Chief Complaint:

When the fast track feature was used, nearly 42% of cases had no reasonable description entered, including 38.3% with only “Sick” or “Sick Person” entered, and 3.5% with no complaint description entered at all (the field was left blank).

When the fast track feature *was not* used, 25% of cases had no reasonable description entered, all of which were listed as “Sick” or “Sick Person.” None were left blank.

This data, obtained from high-performance Accredited Centers, demonstrates a significant problem in collecting and recording information with the unrestricted use of the fast track feature.

The Chief Complaint query “What’s the problem, tell me exactly what happened?” is clearly the most important question in the entire protocol. Failure to obtain the correct Chief Complaint among the various possibilities often confronting the EMD when determining what happened is the single most critical problem in EMD interrogation today.

As a result of this study, an important modification has been made to the functionality of the “What’s the problem, tell me exactly what happened?” field.

Modified Feature Functionality

To ensure that the problem text field in ProQA is not used solely to auto-fill the Age, Year (or month), and Gender fields using the Age/Gender fast track feature, the Academy has established a specific process for its use and requested Priority Dispatch Corp., its contract software development vendor, to implement it in the ProQA software.

It is essential to determine, as well as to enter, valid problem text before this feature can be activated. The specifications to be satisfied for use of the Age/Gender fast track feature are:

There can be no less than 9 characters entered followed by a space in the problem field before any “Age/Gender” info (i.e., 123456789 29yom). The first 9+ characters can be alpha or numeric characters or a combination thereof.

An example would be: **Cardiac arrest 78yof**

Entering the Age/Gender format in the “What’s the problem” field should only be done if that specific information is volunteered by the caller prior to, or during, that part of the interrogation. Asking for this information earlier than, or during, the determination of the Chief Complaint does not follow the well-proven, structured information gathering process of the Case Entry protocol.

This modification reflects the original goal and function of identification of the correct Chief Complaint during Case Entry. The Academy would prefer that this fast track feature not be used at all, but will study the modified version in similar ways to ensure its effectiveness and safety.