Table 1

Themes and Quotations

Themes	Representative Quotations
Use of encoder	
Helpful tool	"I think encoders have been a breath of fresh air and I would think even the experienced coders today rarely look at their books."
Just a tool	"The encoder may walk the coder down the wrong path and if the coder is not book savvy, they may very well arrive at the wrong code."
Increased complexity of computer records	
Hybrid record	"…everything is black and white. I can't go right to the pink sheet because the color is not there."
Electronic health record	"In a patient record you have a story and you just follow along in the text of the story and you can see what has happened. In an EHR the story gets segregated by the entering author and that segregation doesn't methodically flow."
Slower process	"Having the paper record in front of me was a faster process. I have to wait for one page to abort and another to pop up or look for information in multiple screens. It slows you down."
Use of automated coding	
Benefits	"It's great, the computer gives you the codes and you check them over. It's one step up from an encoder."
Effect on coders' job	"I think it will do the same thing as what all technology has done. It will make the job go faster, so you can code twice as many cases."
Effect on coders' skills	"As you get more technology in here, coders will get harder and harder charts."
Likelihood on inpatient cases	"For use in more complex records, like inpatient records, it isn't gonna be there for a long time."
Likelihood on outpatient cases	"I would say 80 percent of the cases I code are straightforward enough for the computer to be able to code it correctly…the other 20 percent should be sent to a person to code it correctly."
To replace coders	"I don't think the coder is ever going to go away. There is only so much of our job that can be automated."
Coders' emotions toward automated coding	
Anger	"There are some angry folks out there right now…that was their job to code that low hanging fruit and some organization, some software has replaced them."
Anxiety	"If they improve that program where it did come up with the right codes where would that leave us?"
Insecurity	"Right now I think I'm OK. But 5 years down the road I don't know. I honestly don't know."
Mistrust	"I think if [Administration/CFO] thought a computer could do our

	job, they'd replace us."
Uncertainty	"I'm not entirely sure what to think. It could be good. But on the other hand it could be a threat to our jobs."
Wonder	"I saw the computer assisted coding demo and I thought that's absolutely wonderful, it's pretty amazing."
Worry	"I do worry about it. It doesn't occupy my mind a lot but I do worry."