

Dermatology Coding Alert

Reader Question: Disregard Generic Code for Plantar Wart

Question: A patient reports to the dermatologist with a painful right foot. The dermatologist finds a pair of plantar warts, which he removes using a scalpel. I reported 17110 with 078.19 appended, and received a denial. Did I choose the wrong procedure code?

Oregon Subscriber

Answer: No, you chose the wrong diagnosis code. Re-submit the claim using 17110 (Destruction [e.g., laser surgery, electrocautery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettage], of benign lesions other than skin tags or cutaneous vascular proliferative lesions; up to 14 lesions) for the wart removals, and 078.12 (Plantar wart) to represent the warts.

Explanation: Before 2009, 078.19 (Other specified viral warts) was the proper diagnosis code for plantar warts. The year 2009 saw the debut of 078.12, however, giving coders and physicians a more appropriate (and specific) code for this very common condition.