

## Internal Medicine Coding Alert

### Reader Question: Avoid Assigning Primary E Codes

**Question:** When should we report an E code as the primary diagnosis code?

South Dakota Subscriber

**Answer:** Never - E codes can be used in addition to other ICD-9 codes (001 to V83.8), but they should never stand alone or be linked directly to a CPT code as the reason a service was performed.

Use E codes to provide the payer with a more complete picture of the patient's condition. More specifically, E codes are used to tell the payer "how the injury or poisoning happened (cause), the intent (unintentional or accidental; or intentional, such as suicide or assault), and the place where the event occurred," according to the AMA's Principles of ICD-9-CM Coding.

- Answers for You Be the Coder and Reader Questions were reviewed by **Kathy Pride, CPC, CCS-P**, a coding consultant for QuadraMed in Port St. Lucie, Fla.