

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Question: Select 079.99 or 079.89 for Diagnosis "Viral Syndrome"

Question: Our internist often uses the phrase "viral syndrome" to describe a patient's symptoms that might include headaches, sore joints, diarrhea, congestion, and others in any combination. What's the best diagnosis?

Arizona Subscriber

Answer: The most accurate choice is 079.99 (Unspecified viral and chlamydial infections; unspecified viral infection). Another option when you have more details could be 079.89 (Other specified viral and chlamydial infections; other specified viral infection). As you noted, these diagnoses can apply to a range of symptoms that your physician determines are related to a viral illness but doesn't document as single viral condition.