

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Questions: Use 327.23 for Specified Organic Sleep Apnea

Question: What is organic sleep apnea? My physician has been using 780.57 to report sleep apnea, but ICD-9 revised 780.57 to say "unspecified" and added 327.23. Would you explain the difference to me?

Texas Subscriber

Answer: When your physician indicates "organic sleep apnea," it means he was able to identify a specific cause of the sleep apnea.

For example, when the internist determines that excessive weight pressing on the patient's ribs and lungs is causing the sleep apnea, you would report 327.23 (Obstructive sleep apnea [adult] [pediatric]).

You would report unspecified sleep apnea (780.57) if your internist is unable to identify the cause of the apnea or if he is still trying to determine the cause. Except for 780.56, all the 780.5x codes are "unspecified," meaning that you should use them when your physician doesn't give a specific cause for the condition. All the 327.2x codes are "specified" causes of organic sleep apnea, except 327.20 (Organic sleep apnea, unspecified).