

Outpatient Facility Coding Alert

You Be the Coder: Choosing a Diagnosis for Red Man Syndrome

Question: What is the correct diagnosis for red man syndrome?

New Jersey Subscriber

Answer: You should code with 695.9 (Unspecified erythematous condition).

Explanation: Red man syndrome is an infusion-related reaction to vancomycin. Patients often have the reaction during their first rapid infusion of the medication or after several doses given as a slow infusion.

Signs of red man syndrome normally appear about 4 to 10 minutes after an infusion starts, or may begin soon after the infusion's completion. The condition typically involves an erythematous rash on the face, neck, and upper torso. Patients commonly complain of diffuse burning, itching, and general discomfort. They can rapidly become dizzy and agitated, and can develop headache, chills, fever, and paresthesia around the mouth.