

Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

READER QUESTIONS: Try to Dress Naked 998.59

Question: We have a patient with a postoperative infection being treated by antibiotics. We think we should list 998.59 (Postoperative infection) as primary in M0230. Is that correct?

Answer: Yes, you are correct to list 998.59 as primary in M0230, but ideally you shouldn't stop there. This code asks for an additional code to identify the type of organism, such as 041.9 (Bacterial infection, NEC). Unfortunately, physicians often neglect to perform a culture to find out, and simply order an antibiotic without further testing.

If you know what kind of organism is causing the patient's infection, or if you're able to obtain this information from the physician, then you should include that additional code with 998.59. In the event that you can't put your hands on this additional information, you may use 998.59 as a stand-alone code.