

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Survey & Clinical News To Use

Is unrecognized pain taking a hidden toll on your residents with dementia? If so, relief may be a simple OTC pain remedy away. A recent small study found that acetaminophen may help elderly dementia patients become more active and socially engaged. Researchers gave the drug to nursing home patients with moderate to severe dementia and found that the patients tended to spend less time in their rooms and more time watching television, listening to music, reading or performing other activities. The study was published in a recent issue of the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society. The OTC pain remedy did not improve residents' agitation and emotional well-being.

Watch for new ICD-9 triggers to the dehydration RAP, effective January 2006. Effective in January, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** is adding newly available detailed dehydration or volume depletion ICD-9 diagnosis subcodes of 276.50, 276.51, or 276.52 to the ICD-9 trigger for the dehydration resident assessment protocol. Until CMS completes the conversion to its new Website, the new dehydration RAP specs are posted on www.qtso.com/mdsdownload.html.

Worried about having no place to code in Section W2 or W3 an immunization offered but not yet given by the MDS assessment reference date? Look for a new and improved Section W (flu and pneumococcal vaccinations) next year. CMS plans to revisit and change the section in the spring when the flu season is over, according to a recent SNF Open Door Forum.

Meanwhile, check out a FAQ explaining when you can code "unable to determine" (a dash) when none of the responses in W2b or W3b apply to a particular situation involving immunizing a resident. The FAQ can be accessed at www.qtso.com/mdsfaq.html.