

MDS Alert

Reader Questions: Follow ICD-10-CM Guidelines for Sepsis Versus Septicemia

Question: I coded MDS item I1200 for a resident as septicemia, but a colleague said that a diagnosis of "sepsis" was more appropriate. However, I thought that the two words meant different conditions. Who's right?

Pennsylvania Subscriber



Answer: According to the ICD-10-CM guidelines, sepsis and septicemia are used interchangeably. Code A41.9 (Sepsis, unspecified organism) includes the note "Septicemia NOS." If you look up "septicemia" on Codify by AAPC, the program takes you to A41.9 (Sepsis, unspecified organism). Make sure you're recording as the diagnosis whatever the resident's clinician included in the resident's medical record.

Beware that there are several Excludes1 and Excludes2 notes for A41.9, including situations where a person has sepsis due to bacteremia (R78.81) or streptococcal sepsis (A40.-).