

Chiropractic Coding & Compliance Alert

You Be the Coder: Does 739.0 Cover All Lesions of the Head?

Question: We generally use 739.x codes for spinal subluxation. However, can I also use 739.0 (Nonallopathic lesions, not elsewhere classified; head region), as the ICD-9 code for a patient who presents with a non-healing lesion of the head?

Rhode Island Subscriber

Answer: No. You are probably incorrectly assigning a code from the Musculoskeletal System and Connective Tissue section instead of reporting a code from the Injury and Poisoning section.

Chiropractors use nonallopathic lesion codes (739.0-739.9) to identify a subluxation or chiropractic dislocation of the spine. These diagnoses explain the medical necessity for chiropractic manipulative treatment.

Example: For a head region subluxation of the spinal code, you would report 98940 (Chiropractic manipulative treatment [CMT]; spinal, 1e - 2 regions) with 739.0 (Nonallopathic lesion, not elsewhere classified; head region).

You probably saw a patient with a wound that wasn't healing. You should report a non-healing wound with an open wound code. ICD-9 lists two codes for open wounds of the head. For an open wound of head without mention of complication, assign 873.8 (Other and unspecified open wound of head without mention of complication). Classify a complicated open wound of the head as 873.9 (Other and unspecified complicated open wound of head).