Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Western Australian Coding Rule

1215/07 Skin ulcer necrosis versus gangrene

WA Coding Rule 0110/06 *Skin ulcer necrosis versus gangrene* is superseded by ACCD Coding Rule ***Skin necrosis*** (Ref No: Q2659) effective 1 January 2014; (log in to view on the ACCD CLIP portal).

DECISION

WA Coding Rule 0110/06 *Skin ulcer necrosis versus gangrene* is retired.

[Effective 01 Jan 2014, ICD-10-AM/ACHI/ACS 8th Ed.]

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Western Australian Coding Rule

0110/06 Skin ulcer necrosis versus gangrene

Q.

Often with traumatic wounds or infection there will be documentation of devitalized tissue or necrotic wound edges or just some mention of necrotic tissue, the extent of the necrosis usually not known. No mention of gangrene.

The ICD 10 indexing for necrosis defaults to coding R02.

For cases with documentation of necrosis irrespective of the extent of necrosis and definitely no mention of gangrene is the coder to assign the code R02 or if documentation suggests the amount of necrosis is small and confined to edges should this be considered part of the traumatic wound and the code not assigned?

Necrosis is commonly documented in the patient records with traumatic wounds, burns, pressure sores etc. Necrosis due to lack of oxygen such as with a MI would be considered part of the MI code as would any necrosis with infection in pneumonia. Gangrene would seem to be a complication of necrotic tissue.

A.

Necrosis and gangrene is already included in pressure ulcers with L89.x by 4th character. Even if one argues gangrene is a matter of extent – then the code already is subdivided by extent.

For other scenarios, we should not jump to the conclusion that ulcer with area of skin necrosis = necrosis or gangrenous ulcer.

When there is documentation of necrotic or gangrenous ulcer, so stated, then Gangrenous ulcer = R02, L97 in that order by index.

Necrotic ulcer = L97, R02 (As there is no exclusion for 'necrosis under L97 only gangrene –L97 must be coded first.)

When documentation is 'area of necrosis, or necrotic edge or necrotic base' code the ulcer followed by the necrosis code. L98x, RO2 or L97, R02.

Coding the area of necrosis along with the ulcer or wound is subject to ACS 0002 *Additional diagnoses*. The necrosis should require some additional care/intervention. It is correct to code R02 if it meets ACS 0002 independently.

Important note: The underlying principle is that necrotic ulcer and ulcer with area of necrosis may not be the same thing.

DECISION

Code necrotic ulcer to *L97 Ulcer of lower limb, not elsewhere classified, R02 Gangrene, not elsewhere classified*. Code gangrenous ulcer to *R02, L97*.

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An ulcer with necrotic edges or necrotic base will have the *R02* assigned along with the ulcer code only if the necrosis meets ACS 0002. i.e. the necrosis requires additional care/intervention. A query will be sent to the NCCH in regards to the definition of necrosis=gangrene or necrosis only in its higher severity = gangrene.

[Effective 20 Jan 2010, ICD-10-AM/ACHI/ACS 6th Ed.]

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