



Western Australian Coding Rule

0210/07 *Varicella zoster encephalitis*

Q.

What is the correct code for varicella-zoster encephalitis without specification of stage of infection i.e. unknown whether patient has chickenpox or shingles?

A.

Varicella-zoster virus is the cause of varicella (chickenpox) and herpes zoster (shingles). After primary varicella infection, the virus remains dormant in the nervous system. Reactivation of the virus causes herpes zoster (shingles). Primary infection (varicella/chickenpox) is coded B01.x. Zoster/shingles caused by reactivation of the virus is coded B02.x. These codes should not be assigned together - the coder needs to determine from the documentation which stage of infection is present.

DECISION

Determine from the documentation which stage of the infection is present, or obtain clarification from the clinician. If this is not possible, assign the lesser code B01.1 *Varicella encephalitis*.

[Effective 17 February 2010, ICD-10-AM/ACHI/ACS 6th Ed.]