



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

# Western Australian Coding Rule

## 0424/01 Is 'clinically dry' synonymous with dehydration?

**Q.**

Is 'clinically dry' synonymous with dehydration?

**Example progress notes**

Probable clostridium difficile

Diarrhoea, clinically dry, ?secretory diarrhoea, ?clostridium difficile

Plan:

- One litre intravenous hydration then encourage per oral fluids
- Diet as tolerated – bland
- Chase stool. If clostridium difficile negative cease Vancomycin
- Known aortic stenosis, keep towards euvolaemia

**A.**

'Clinically dry' is not specifically indexed in ICD-10-AM, however clinical advice indicates it's synonymous with dehydration

For documentation of 'clinically dry' meeting ACS 0001 *Principal diagnosis* or ACS 0002 *Additional diagnosis* criteria for coding, assign E86 *Volume depletion* following Index pathway:

**Dehydration** (see also hypovolaemia) E86

The following terms/observations are not synonymous with dehydration but may indicate a dehydrated/'clinically dry' patient:

- 'clinically dry' or 'dry' when used to describe a specific body area, e.g., dry mucous membranes, dry skin etc.
- concentrated urine
- 'dry,' not otherwise specified
- low urine output
- reduced skin turgor

When documentation of these terms (or any other terms suggestive of dehydration) meets ACS 0001 or ACS 0002 criteria for coding, don't automatically classify them to E86. Ask clinicians to clarify such documentation, as per ACS 0010 *Clinical documentation and general abstraction guidelines* (i.e., query the clinician on ambiguous documentation).

Instruction on classifying 'clinically dry' differs between states, so a query has been submitted to the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA).

### **DECISION**

**When documentation of 'clinically dry,' meets the criteria for coding, assign:  
E86 *Volume depletion***

**This WA Coding Rule has been submitted as a query to the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA).**

**[Effective 1 April 2024, ICD-10-AM/ACHI/ACS 12th Ed.]**