

One Term at a Time: Removing a Racist Term from the Electronic Health Record

BACKGROUND

- Vancomycin is an antibiotic that is used to treat serious bacterial infections and is the second most prescribed antimicrobial at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)
- "Red man syndrome" is a term used to describe an infusion related reaction that can occur with vancomycin. While not a true allergic reaction, this syndrome is documented in the electronic health record (EHR) as an allergy-and is used in other clinical documentation.
- "Red man" is a pejorative term referring to persons of Native American descent. "Red man syndrome" also describes the reaction as it would manifest in patients with light skin, which could lead to under-recognition of skin findings in patients with dark skin.
- In May 2021, the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society and the Infectious Diseases Society of America published a joint statement endorsing the term "vancomycin infusion reaction" to replace the term "red man syndrome."

Objective

To remove the term "red man syndrome" and replace it with vancomycin infusion reaction" across the CHOP enterprise by December 2021.

METHODS

- A query was performed in the EHR to check the allergy field for any records with the term "red man syndrome." This term was automatically replaced with "vancomycin infusion reaction."
- When entering new allergies, the search term "red man syndrome" yielded "vancomycin infusion reaction"
- This change was communicated enterprise-wide via announcements, screen savers, banners, and a QR code.
- Outreach to local medical, pharmacy, nursing and allied health schools occurred to recommend curriculum updates.

RESULTS

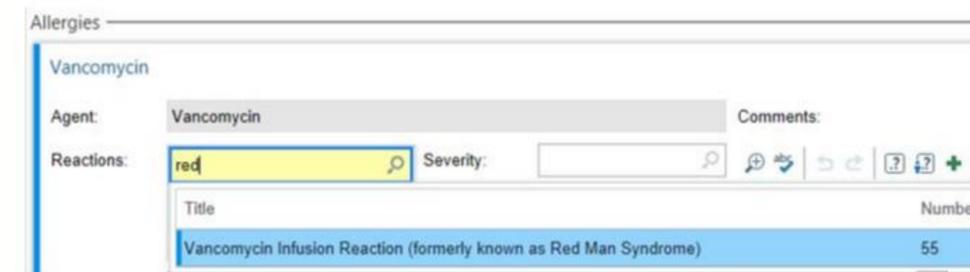
- 986 patient allergies were updated in the EHR in December 2021.
- 833 were changed through coding and 153 records were updated manually.
- Four pathways, one procedure, the CHOP formulary, and the enterprises safety reporting system (KAPS) were revised to reflect the correct terminology.

New Terminology!
VANCOMYCIN INFUSION REACTION
(PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS RED MAN SYNDROME)



SYMPTOMS (may include)	WHAT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Face, neck, trunk, and/or upper extremities• Maculopapular rash• Flushing• Erythema• Pruritis• Hypotension• Tachycardia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decrease the infusion rate• Consider premedication with diphenhydramine prior to subsequent doses• Document the reaction as "vancomycin infusion reaction" in the allergy section of the electronic health record

Visit the Antimicrobial Stewardship Program @CHOP Community or scan the QR Code.



Allergies

Vancomycin

Agent: Vancomycin Comments:

Reactions: red Severity: []

Title	Number
Vancomycin Infusion Reaction (formerly known as Red Man Syndrome)	55

IMPACT/NEXT STEPS

- Medical terminology can contribute to implicant bias. This initiative to change one term took eight months to implement and required modifications in five electronic platforms.
- The depth of medical terminology that needs revision is unknown. A systematic and efficient approach should be developed to review and eliminate biased language in the EHR.

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

- Healthcare has a history of using words that are offensive often leading to stigmatization. Recognizing and removing derogatory terminology from clinical documentation is one step towards equitable medical care. These changes may have particular relevance in the era of open clinical notes, where patients can directly view the EHR.