Talk Ten (ICD 10) Tuesday Tips...Got a Minute:

Specificity: *noun* spe·ci·fic·i·ty \\ spe-sə-ˈfi-sə-tē\
the quality or condition of being free from ambiguity

Is it Excisional or Non-excisional Debridement?
- To what level was the debridement performed?

When documenting a debridement procedure, proper descriptors are **essential** to facilitate accurate coding, including the **level of debridement**. Verbiage such as “down to and including/not including fascia, muscle, bone, or joint” is needed for a complete picture of the debridement performed. Below are guidelines to differentiate excisional and non-excisional debridement.

**Excisional Debridement**

Surgical removal or cutting away of devitalized tissue, necrosis, or slough down to viable tissue using a blade/scalpel (not scissors), and outside or beyond wound margin. The use of the terms “sharp” or debridement to “bleeding tissue” may imply “excisional” **but is not precise enough**…’excisional’ must be documented in order to code as such.

**Documentation must include:** **Technique** (e.g. excisional); **Instrument** (e.g. scalpel); **Nature of tissue** (devitalized, necrotic etc); **Appearance and Size**; **Depth of debridement** (e.g. skin, muscle, bone etc)

_E.g. “Using a #5 blade, I excisionally debrided the necrotic skin around the edges of the elbow cellulitis. The wound measured 2 cm x 2 cm and was covered with damp gauze at conclusion of procedure.”_

**Non-Excisional Debridement**

Cleaning, brushing, scrubbing, washing, irrigating of wound; chemical or enzymatic treatment; or minor trimming/scraping to remove fragments of dead tissue. Debridement is usually only to level of subcutaneous tissue.