

# Assessing the incidence of "Red Man Syndrome" language in the electronic health record

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# Disclosure Statement

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Conflicts of interest: None

Sponsorship: None

Proprietary Information may be subject to interpretation

Speaker's presentation is educational in nature and abides by the non-commercial guidelines

# Learning Objectives



- Identify the reasons behind the universal call to remove “Red Man Syndrome” from our language
- Assess the prevalence of RMS language in the electronic health record for patients with allergies to Vancomycin
- Create active efforts to remove RMS language from past and future documentation

# UW Medicine Health System including Montlake, HMC, NWH, and SCCA

## Montlake (ML) Campus

Cancer care

Cardiac surgery, advance heart failure, and mechanical circulatory support care  
SOT of liver, kidney, heart, lung, pancreas, intestine



### FY 2020

Beds: 810

Admissions: 26,998

Emergency Department visits: 56,895

Organ Transplants: 440

Bone marrow transplants(with SCCA): 322

Clinic visits: 408,767

## Harborview (HMC) Campus

Level 1 adult/pediatric

trauma and burn care

Emergency medicine and disaster management

Comprehensive stroke center



### FY 2020

Beds: 413

Admissions: 15,329

Emergency Department visits: 53,550

Clinic visits: 228,852



# UW Medicine Health System including Montlake, HMC, NWH, and SCCA

## Seattle Cancer Care Alliance

Medical oncology and hematology

Surgical and radiation oncology

Bone marrow transplantation

Immunotherapy

Screening



### FY 2020

Patient visits: 80,885

Infusion bays: 59 dedicated infusion bays with additional infusion suites in the Care Neighborhood

Clinical trials: over 350 active treatment studies

Immunotherapy clinic: 15 patient care suites

## Northwest (NW) Campus

Acute care community hospital

Level 1 Stroke Center

General medicine, cardiology

Cardiac and general surgery



# Study Objectives

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- Determine the frequency of the use of the term "Red Man Syndrome" in the electronic health record through retrospective review
- Identify areas for education efforts to prevent future use of the term

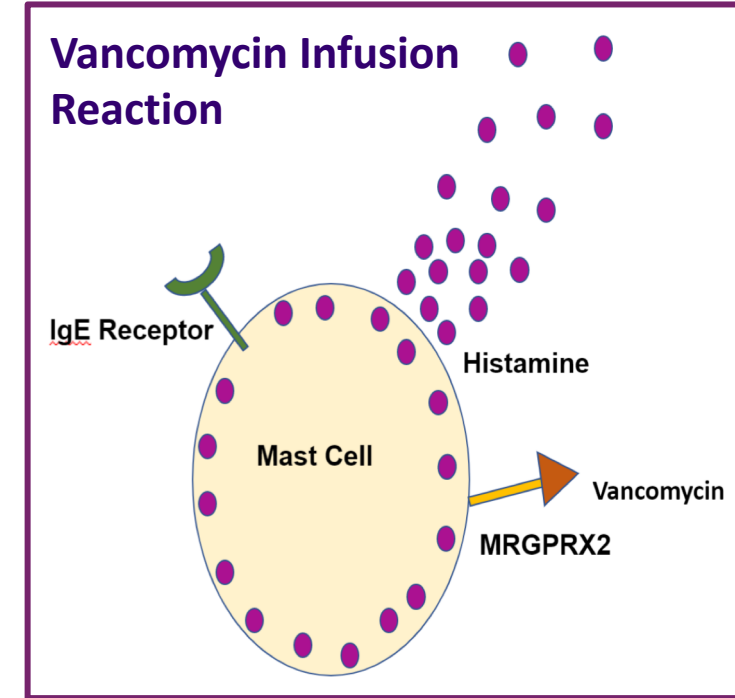
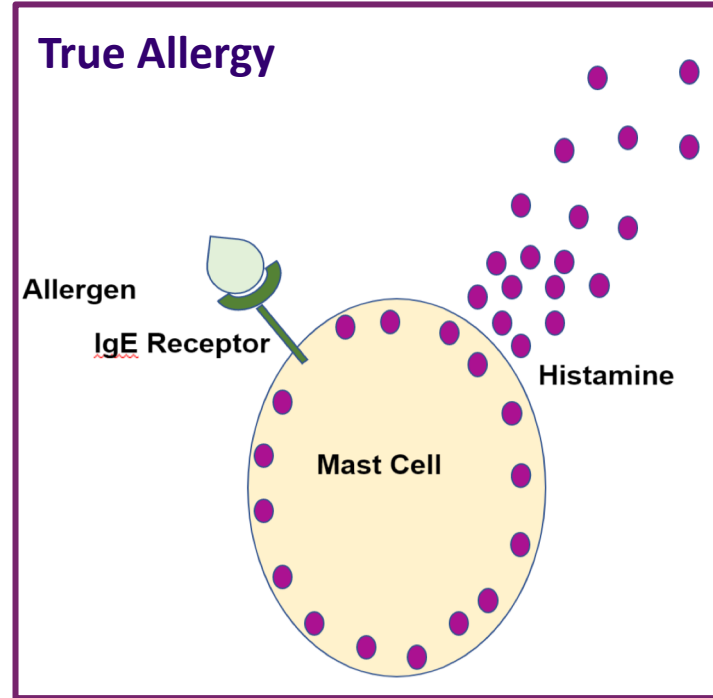
# Vancomycin Infusion Phenomenon

Full Body  
Rash

Flushing

Hypotension

Respiratory  
distress



# Introduction

## *Removing the slur "Red Man Syndrome"*



### **Position on Terminology for Vancomycin Flushing Reactions**

**September 2021**

#### **Position:**

The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), its HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA), the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA), the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society (PIDS) and the Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists (SIDP) support universal removal of the slur “red man syndrome” and recommend replacing it with “vancomycin infusion reaction,”<sup>1</sup> a term that emphasizes pathophysiology over visual appearance on skin. We suggest the following concrete actions:

# Background

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## Why change the term?

Excludes diverse dermatologic findings

Perpetuates the red-man stereotype against Native Americans and Indigenous People

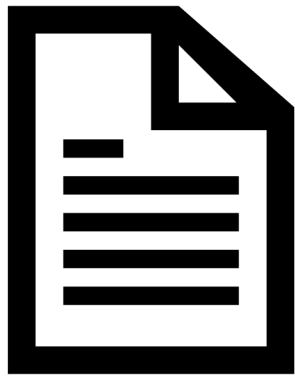
Not a reflection of the physiology of the reaction

Replacing the term is an effort against institutional racism which can influence social determinants of health



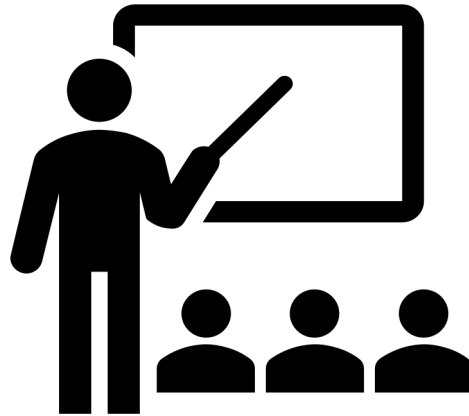
# Background

## *How to remove the slur*



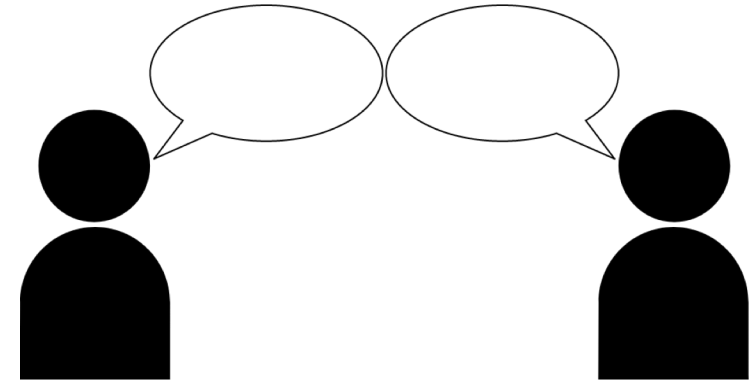
1

Remove from the  
documentation



2

Change our teaching  
documents



3

Change our written and  
verbal communication

# Examples of "RMS" Language in the EHR

- Allergy banners are present in the electronic health record at any point of care
- Study replaced “RMS” with “Vancomycin Infusion Reaction”

**Vancomycin**

Agent: Vancomycin

Reactions: Skin: Rash      Severity: Low      Comments:

Infusion/hypersensitivity react...      Noted: 11/17/2008

Reaction Type: Side Effect

CAUSE RED MAN'S SYNDROME.  
CAUSE RED MAN'S SYNDROME.

Past Updates    X Delete

# Research Methods

Patient Name	Patient MRN	Drug	Reaction	Reaction Type	Allergy Severity	Free Text Section
XXXXX	XXXXX	Vanco	Swelling	Side Effect	High	Red Man Syndrome

- EPIC report generated with all the patients with Vancomycin allergies documented in the allergy section
- Report was filtered by the free-text containing the word “red”
- If RMS language was detected, it was replaced with “Vancomycin Infusion Reaction”
- Reaction category was also standardized the “Infusion Reaction”

WE DID NOT ELIMINATE references within the medical notes

# Results

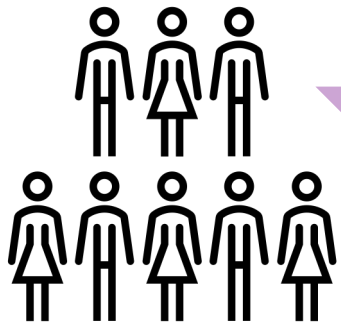
4137 records of  
Vanco allergies in  
10/2021

4<sup>th</sup> year  
pharmacy  
students

Nursing  
Staff

Pharmacy  
Staff

Education  
Efforts



4.8 Million  
Patients in the  
UW Medicine  
health system

830 records  
with the  
word "red"

662  
records  
removed  
and  
replaced!

Continued  
monitoring  
with an  
EPIC list

# Discussion



## Education Efforts for Change!

### Current:

- Updating Pharmacy School 4th year Orientation Materials
- Educating pharmacy staff in collaboration with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) office
- Created an email flyer for the CMO to email all providers at UW-Medicine
- Educated all nursing staff with an email from CNO's weekly update 04/07/22

### Future:

- Prospective monitoring list for all campuses
- Educating patients on change in terminology



FLYER SENT TO CMO AND CNO

Emailed to all nursing staff!

Have you seen or heard the term ***“Red Man Syndrome”***  
to describe Vancomycin infusion reaction?

LET'S WORK TOGETHER to fix this  
at UW Medicine!

Why change the term?

- It perpetuates discrimination against Native American & Indigenous Peoples including our patients who may withdraw from receiving our care if referred to as a “red man.”
- It is NOT a reflection of the physiology of the reaction—not everyone turns red!
- It affects women and men equally.

#### **ACTION**

1) If you hear someone say or write *“red man syndrome,”* please share this information with them. Ask them to say **“Vancomycin infusion reaction”** instead. *Please be kind*—this is a new term for most healthcare providers!

2) If you see *“red man syndrome”* in an Epic allergy banner, replace this terminology- see below:

Vancomycin

Comments:

Other reaction(s): Sensitivity

Red Man Syndrome tolerates at slower rate (100ml/hr)

Comments:

Other reaction(s): Sensitivity

Vancomycin Infusion Reaction tolerates at slower rate (100ml/hr)

> Characters remaining: 409



SOCIETY OF INFECTIOUS  
DISEASES PHARMACISTS

#### Position on Terminology for Vancomycin Flushing Reactions (September 2021)

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UW Medicine

Questions? [uwmedasp@uw.edu](mailto:uwmedasp@uw.edu)

# Results

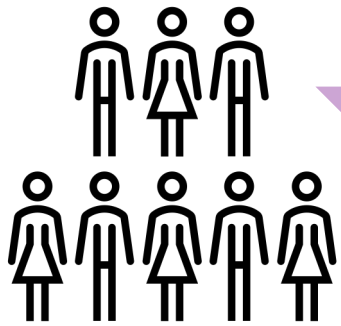
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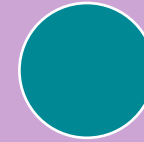
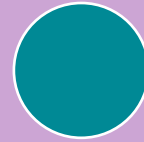
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830 records  
with the  
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Continued  
monitoring  
with an  
EPIC list

5 instances  
of RMS

# Discussion- Did our intervention work?



## Monitoring admitted patients at UWMC-Montlake

- Reviewing a list for admitted patients at UWMC-ML with Vancomycin allergies
  - Proactively changing Allergy banner when "RMS" language is found
- Monitor weekly since 3/20/22
  - 5 incidences of “RMS” language in 5 weeks of monitoring
    - 5/42 (11.9%) entries had “RMS” language
  - Currently the list is only at UWMC-ML site
  - Future efforts would include all UW-Medicine campuses

# Conclusion

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"Red Man Syndrome" is an outdated term that we should actively try to replace

## *Replacing Records*

- We created an EPIC report with all patients with allergies to Vancomycin to screen for any "RMS" language
- Prospective monitoring list is reviewed weekly for RMS language at one UW-Medicine site

## *Education efforts*

- Educated pharmacy students, pharmacy staff at UWMC-ML in collaboration with DEI, and created an email flyer for nurses and providers

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# QUESTIONS?



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