

**DATA STANDARDS AND QUALITY CONTROL
MEMORANDUM
DSQC #2005-02**

CATEGORY: CLARIFICATION

SUBJECT: Fine Needle Aspiration of Regional Lymph Nodes

EFFECTIVE: Cases Diagnosed January 1, 2005 Forward

Fine needle aspirations (removal of cells or tissue) of regional lymph nodes are coded in the Scope of Regional Lymph Node Surgery field. Additionally, FNA biopsies of regional nodes are also included in the Number of Positive and Examined Regional Lymph Nodes fields. For Number of Positive Regional Lymph Nodes, if the total number of positive aspirated, biopsied, sampled, or dissected lymph nodes cannot be determined on the basis of cytology or histology, code the combination of lymph nodes to 97. For the Number of Examined Lymph Nodes, if it cannot be determined how many lymph nodes were aspirated, biopsied, sampled, or dissected, code the number of nodes to 98. If an FNA of regional nodes is the only procedure performed on lymph nodes, code Regional Lymph Nodes Positive/Examined to 95/95. Whether or not the lymph node aspiration resulted in cytology or histology does not affect the codes.

Example #1: Breast cancer patient had a biopsy of a sentinel axillary lymph node that was negative. An FNA of an axillary lymph node was performed on the same day and was positive. A month later, an axillary lymph node dissection was performed and the pathology report stated that 11/19 lymph nodes were positive.

Surgical Procedure #1: Code Scope of Regional Lymph Node Surgery to Code 2 - Sentinel lymph node biopsy.

Surgical Procedure #2: Code Scope of Regional Lymph Node Surgery to Code 7 – Sentinel lymph node biopsy & code 3, 4, or 5 at different times.

Rationale: Codes 0-7 are hierarchical. If only one procedure can be recorded, code the procedure that is numerically higher.

Code CS Regional Lymph Nodes Positive/Examined: 12/21

Rationale: Positive: 0 sentinel node, 1 FNA of a node, 11 dissected nodes;
Examined: 1 sentinel node, 1 FNA of a node, 19 dissected nodes.

Example # 2: Breast cancer patient had an FNA biopsy of an axillary lymph node that was positive for carcinoma. Subsequently, an axillary lymph node dissection was done elsewhere. Findings stated to be negative, but unknown how many lymph nodes were examined.

Surgical Procedure #1: Code Scope of Regional Lymph Node Surgery to Code 1 – Biopsy or aspiration of regional lymph nodes, NOS

Surgical Procedure #2: Code Scope of Regional Lymph Node Surgery to Code 3 – Number of regional lymph nodes removed unknown or not stated; regional lymph node removed, NOS

Code CS regional Lymph Nodes Positive/Examined: 01/97

Rationale: A single lymph node was positive on FNA, thus Regional Lymph Nodes Positive is coded to 01; regional lymph node removal was documented as a dissection, number of nodes is unknown/not stated, thus Regional Lymph Nodes Examined is coded to 97.