Audit Corner

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The Data Standards and Quality Control (DSQC) Unit performs recoding audits throughout the year. These audits are performed to monitor the quality of the data in the California Cancer Registry (CCR) database, Eureka.

The results of these audits are used to identify education and training needs, profile trends in discrepancies, and identify needed revisions to Volume I. The audit findings can also serve as the basis for presentations at regional, state or national workshops, or educational conferences. Other benefits of these audits are the discovery of vague or confusing guidelines issued by the standard setting agencies. As a result of the audits conducted in 2009, 18 questions were submitted to SEER via the SINQ system for clarification. Some of these clarifications also resulted in Statewide DSQC Memos.

In 2009, the DSQC Unit performed four recoding audits. The selected sites were ovary, bladder, lymphoma, and breast. The audits were performed utilizing the peer review method where each case is audited blindly and independently by two auditors who use the text submitted by the abstractor to recode the selected data items being audited. The original code must match the recode by the auditor. A discrepancy results if these codes do not match. When both the primary and secondary auditors complete their assigned cases, the primary auditor then compares the discrepancies that both auditors identified. The two auditors then reconcile their differences and discuss any issues that they may have discovered during the audit process. Once the reconciliation between the auditors is complete, the results are sent to the regional registries to be corrected in the Eureka database.

The results of audits are also used to produce educational modules. The modules incorporate the discrepancies identified in the audits, and clarify the correct coding procedures as documented in Volume I or SEER SINQ. Currently, there are two modules posted on the CCR website (http://ccrcal.org) that are the result of recent recoding audits performed by the DSQC Unit. We are currently working on other modules that should be posted soon. Everyone benefits from these modules. By reviewing these modules and taking the short quiz at the end, registrars can earn valuable CEU's, while also learning how to avoid common coding pitfalls. In future issues of *The Criterion*, we will be sharing site specific audit results, recommendations, and subsequent actions taken.