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Reader Question: Technique Dictates 64505 or 64999 for Sphenopalatine Ganglion Block

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Question: *Our pain management specialist administered a sphenopalatine ganglion block. Does CPT® include a code for this type of block, or **do I report an unlisted procedure? If I must choose "unlisted," what's an appropriate code for comparison?***

Arkansas Subscriber

Answer: Physicians can use either an injection of the medication or a topical approach, typically using long cotton-tip applicators inserted into the nose, for this type of block, so verify his documented technique before coding.

If he administered an actual injection, report 64505 (Injection, anesthetic agent; sphenopalatine ganglion).

Topical option: Some providers don't separately bill for the topical approach; they include it as part of their E/M service in counseling the patient on how to perform the technique at home. **If you're justified in billing the topical approach, report 64999 (Unlisted procedure, nervous system).** You can associate it with 64505 for reimbursement comparisons, with a reduced value of 2.95 RVUs. [...]

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Profile for Code 64505 N block spenopalatine gangl Status: Active

Payment Summary		GPCI / Relative Values			Global Period	
Retail Non-Facility(100%)	\$105.89	zip 85016-0000	GPCI	RVU	0	
Allowable:	\$105.89	Work:	1	1.36	Pre Op:	0%
NP Limit:	\$115.68	Exp:	1	1.47	Post Op:	0%
Conversion Factor:	35.7547	Malp:	0.877	0.15	Post Op:	0%
HPSA for Zipcode 85016	URBAN area - does not qualify for HPSA bonus payments					

Payment Policy Indicators

Multiple Surgeries:	Payments reduced by 100%, 50%, 50%, 50%, 50%, BR
Bilateral:	150% payment adjustment applies (1.5 X fee schedule price)
Assist Surg:	Is NOT payable
Co Surg:	Co-Surgeons Not Permitted
Team Surg:	NOT permitted for this code
Physician Service Codes:	Cannot use 26 or TC modifiers
Global Days:	Minor procedure that includes E/M service same day

Miscellaneous

Raw Data:
64505N block spenopalatine ganglA1.361.471.470.980.152.982.49000002110035.75479099000

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HEALTHCARE FRAUD SHIELD CODING CORNER

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MAY

Sphenopalatine Ganglion Block Coding

Question to Healthcare Fraud Shield:

What is the proper procedure code for Sphenopalatine ganglion block? It is not an injection, therefore 64505 is not the correct code. It is a minimally invasive procedure, whereby an anesthetic or a neurolytic is introduced intranasally for topical administration to sphenopalatine ganglion.

Dear Healthcare Fraud Shield Reader:

Great question! According to some advice found on justcoding.com

Our pain management physician also performs sphenopalantine nerve blocks using a lidocaine soaked Q-tip. I submitted this coding scenario to the AMA through knowledgebase (KB#5436) and the AMA replied:

“According to our CPT Advisors and from a CPT coding perspective, it would not be appropriate to report code 64505, Injection, anesthetic agent; sphenopalatine ganglion, as this code represents a procedure requiring the performance of an “injection”. Therefore, the insertion of the Lidocaine soaked Q-tip in the nostril is not reported separately by any specific CPT code, and would be considered inclusive of an appropriate level E/M, as appropriate. Alternatively, if performed in the absence of an accompanying E/M service, the unlisted code 30999, Unlisted procedure, nose, or 64999, Unlisted procedure, nervous system, should be reported. Respectfully, CPT Education and Information Services.”

If you have an AMA Knowledgebase account set up, you can search the knowledgebase for KB#5436 and find the above question and response.

Thank you!

-Healthcare Fraud Shield

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