

Dermatology Coding Alert

Reader Questions: 76880 Solves Your Ultrasound Conundrum

Question: Which code should I report when the dermatologist performs an ultrasound of a skin lesion on the patient's arm? This is also known as a soft-tissue ultrasound, but the only soft-tissue ultrasound codes I can find refer to procedures the dermatologist completed on the patient's head or neck (76536).

Michigan Subscriber

Answer: Although the soft-tissue ultrasound code (76536, Ultrasound, soft tissues of head and neck [e.g., thyroid, parathyroid, parotid], B-scan and/or real time with image documentation) is limited to the head and neck, you should instead report the code for ultrasound of an extremity (76880, Ultrasound, extremity, non-vascular, B-scan and/or real time with image documentation). The descriptor for 76880 does not state "skin" or "soft tissue" but will cover an ultrasound the dermatologist performed on a patient's arm. Therefore, this is the most specific code for the procedure you describe.