

Dermatology Coding Alert

READER QUESTIONS: Forget Bilateral Modifiers for Verrucae

Question: If a patient has bilateral verrucae (078.19) and the doctor treats two sites, one on each foot, can we file two 17110 codes using the left (LT) and right (RT) modifiers?

Arizona Subscriber

Answer: Unfortunately not. Code 17110 (Destruction [e.g., laser surgery, electrosurgery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettement], of flat warts, molluscum contagiosum, or milia; up to 14 lesions) includes treatment of wart number one through 14, regardless of location. You should not report this code twice for bilateral treatments.

Some dermatologists opt to use 17000 (Destruction [e.g., laser surgery, electrosurgery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettement], all benign or premalignant lesions [e.g., actinic keratoses] other than skin tags or cutaneous vascular proliferative lesions; first lesion) for the first wart and +17003 (... second through 14 lesions, each [list separately in addition to code for first lesion]) for each additional wart through number 14.