

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Questions: Payer Preference Important in Base Laceration Repair Code Selection

Question: If our provider used a tissue adhesive instead of placing a suture, can this procedure be reported using laceration repair codes (such as 12001), or should I report HCPCS code, G0168?

New York Subscriber

Answer: Depending on the payer, you have two code choices: 12001 (Simple repair of superficial wounds of scalp, neck, axillae, external genitalia, trunk and/or extremities [including hands and feet]; 2.5 cm or less) or G0168 (Wound closure utilizing tissue adhesive[s] only).

You can use repair codes from the CPT® range, 12001-13160 when your physician performs wound closure using sutures, staples, or tissue adhesives. So, it is not necessary that you will have to restrict usage of repair codes only when your clinician used a suture for laceration repair. Unless a payer, such as Medicare, is specific about using the HCPCS code, most payers will look for the CPT® repair codes when your clinician performs laceration repair.