

Neurosurgery Coding Alert

Reader Question: Decipher These Meningeal, Spinal Cord Tumor ICD-10 Options

Question: How do I report malignant meningeal and spinal cord tumors?

California Subscriber

Answer: When your neurosurgeon treats a spinal tumor, first make sure you know which structure in the spine is actually involved. For malignant tumors of the spinal cord, you would report C72.0 (Malignant neoplasm of spinal cord). For malignant neoplasms of the cauda equina, you would report C72.1 (Malignant neoplasm of cauda equina).

Cauda equina defined: Cauda equina is the bundle of spinal nerves and spinal nerve roots that originate in the tip of the spinal cord. This bundle consists of nerve pairs that originate from second lumbar level to fifth sacral level, and the coccygeal nerve. This bundle has both sensory and motor nerves and supplies the pelvic organs, perineum, and lower limbs.

When you are reporting malignant tumors in the meningeal coverings of the spinal cord, you must

focus on the cerebral or spinal location of the meningeal neoplasms.

To report malignant neoplasm of the cerebral meninges, you would report C70.0 (Malignant neoplasm of cerebral meninges). To report malignant neoplasm of spinal meninges, you would report C70.1 (Malignant neoplasm of spinal meninges). And to report unspecified malignant neoplasms of the meninges, you would report C70.9 (Malignant neoplasm of meninges, unspecified).