

Eli's Rehab Report

You Be the Coder: How to Report Quantitative Sensory Testing

Question: I've heard that CPT has new codes for quantitative sensory testing (QST). What is QST, and how should I use the new codes?

Texas Subscriber

Answer: For dates of service before July 1, 2005, you should report QST using unlisted-procedure code 95999 (Unlisted neurological or neuromuscular diagnostic procedure).

Remember: Five new CPT Codes Category III codes became effective July 1, 2005, but did not get published in the CPT book until 2006. For any dates of service after July 1, you will be able to choose from among the five new codes--as appropriate to the type of stimulation the physiatrist uses--to describe QST:

- 0106T--Quantitative sensory testing (QST), testing and interpretation per extremity; using touch pressure stimuli to assess large diameter sensation
- 0107T--...using vibration stimuli to assess large diameter fiber sensation
- 0108T--...using cooling stimuli to assess small nerve fiber sensation and hyperalgesia
- 0109T--...using heat-pain stimuli to assess small nerve fiber sensation and hyperalgesia
- 0110T--...using other stimuli to assess sensation.

You will report QST procedures per extremity, not per individual test site. For example, the physiatrist uses touch pressure stimuli to check sensation at multiple sites of a diabetic patient's left foot. In this case, because the physiatrist tests only one extremity, you should report a single unit of 0106T.

Different stimuli mean different tests: If the physiatrist uses more than one type of stimulation, even on the same limb, you can report separate code units to describe each type of stimulation.

If the physiatrist tests several sites of the left foot with touch pressure stimuli, but also assesses small-nerve sensation using cooling stimuli, you should report both 0106T and 0108T.

What is QST? QST measures sensations mediated by different kinds of nerve fibers, such as vibrotactile sensations mediated by large nerve fibers, cooling sensation mediated by medium-size nerve fibers, warm sensation mediated by small nerve fibers, and heat- and cold-evoked pain sensations mediated by the smallest nerve fibers. QST is noninvasive and generally painless.