

Pain Management Coding Alert

Reader Question: Consider 721.3 for Lumbar Facet Osteoarthritis Diagnosis

Question: When researching codes for lumbar facet osteoarthritis, I found 721.3 and 716.98. Can you tell me which is correct?

Indiana Subscriber

Answer: First, query your physician to determine if the terms "osteoarthritis" and "spondylosis" are being used interchangeably in relationship to the spine and/or paravertebral facet joints.

Diagnosis 721.3 (Lumbosacral spondylosis without myelopathy) includes lumbar or lumbosacral arthritis, osteoarthritis, or spondylarthritis. Because the diagnosis includes these conditions, you can report 721.3 if you find that your provider is using the terms interchangeably. Notice that the descriptor shows greater specificity in regards to the diagnosis being specific to the lumbar/lumbosacral area.