

Pain Management Coding Alert

You Be the Coder: TPIs for Myofascial Pain Syndrome

Question: A patient with chronic myofascial pain syndrome presents for trigger point injections (TPIs) to relieve pain. Notes indicate that the physician injected a single trigger point in three different muscles. What is myofascial pain syndrome, and how can I establish medical necessity for these TPIs?

Kentucky Subscriber

Answer: The ICD-10 code for myofascial pain syndrome, or myalgia, is M79.1- (Myalgia). Append M79.1- to 20553 (Injection[s]; single or multiple trigger point[s], 3 or more muscle[s]) on your TPI claim.

Major criteria: According to Noridian local coverage determination (LCD) L34211, all four of the following elements must be present to establish a myalgia diagnosis:

- A. "Regional pain complaint
- B. "Pain complaint or altered sensation in the expected distribution of referred pain from a trigger point
- C. "Taut band palpable in an accessible muscle with exquisite tenderness at one point along the length of it
- D. "Some degree of restricted range of motion, when measurable."

Minor criteria: Noridian's LCD goes on to state that only one of following four elements is necessary to diagnose myalgia:

- A. "Reproduction of referred pain pattern by stimulating the trigger point
- B. "Altered sensation by pressure on the tender spot
- C. "Local response elicited by snapping palpation at the tender spot or by needle insertion into the tender spot
- D. "Pain alleviated by stretching or injecting the tender spot."

Best bet: Be sure the patient meets the above criteria before choosing the M79.1- code.

For more on Noridian's TPI coverage, see:

[https://med.noridianmedicare.com/documents/10525/5321621/Local+Coverage+Determination+for+Trigger+Point+Injections+\(L34211\)](https://med.noridianmedicare.com/documents/10525/5321621/Local+Coverage+Determination+for+Trigger+Point+Injections+(L34211)).