



EXCISIONAL VS NON-EXCISIONAL DEBRIDEMENT

Administrative Consultant Service

Updated 12/18

What a Difference a Word Can Make!

Incorrectly reported debridement procedures are prime targets for recoupment under Recovery Audit and other external reviews.

Reviewers based their documentation requirements on the following reporting guidelines:

*"Excisional debridement involves the use of a scalpel to remove devitalized tissue. Documentation of **excisional** debridement should be very specific regarding the type of debridement. If the documentation is not clear or if there is any question about the procedure, the provider should be **queried** for clarification.*

A code is assigned for excisional debridement when the provider documents "excisional debridement,"; and/or the documentation meets the root operation definition of "Excision" (cutting out or off, without replacement, a portion of a body part)." (CC3Q15)

Document **TYPE** of debridement, **LOCATION (with laterality if applicable)**, **INSTRUMENTS USED**, **APPROACH**, and **DEPTH** of debridement!

*Did you know...
Your documentation
can help justify
payment and length of
stay?*



Are you
receiving
appropriate
reimbursement?

Questions? Contact us at (405) 878-0118 or email us at info@acsteam.net

EXCISIONAL DEBRIDEMENT

- Physician documents “excisional debridement”
- "Using a sharp scalpel, I first connected the abscess sites and excised down through the subcutaneous tissue with electrocautery. The tissue was in the process of liquefying and was nonviable. The wound measured 8 cm wide by 4 cm long and 2.5 cm deep, and was extensively excised." - *documentation meets the definition of “excised”.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION NEEDED:

- "The debridement was sharp using knife dissection."
 - *“Sharp” is not automatically considered to be excisional debridement; the reference to “knife dissection” might only refer to the approach—how was the actual tissue removal carried out?*
- "I have debrided the abscess cavity, removing necrotic tissue and bone by sharp debridement."
 - *What was the instrument used?*
- "debridement of bone, fascia or muscle"
 - *Does this mean the muscle was debrided? How was the debridement performed?*

AHA Coding Clinic 2015, Quarter 1; Quarter 3

MS-DRG IMPACT

- Debridement may or may not impact the MS-DRG. Review provider documentation to assure the depth of the debridement is documented, along with the site and type. For subcutaneous tissue and deeper layers, specifying the approach as open vs percutaneous is critical to coding accuracy.

INTEGRAL TO OTHER PROCEDURES

- Debridement is frequently considered integral to other procedures (preparation for skin graft, cleaning of open fracture, etc.). The physician's objective in performing the debridement should be clear in order for the coder to know whether the debridement is a separately reportable procedure.

NONEXCISIONAL DEBRIDEMENT

- VersaJet
- Pulsatile lavage, digressive debridement
- Mechanical lavage, irrigation
- High pressure irrigation