

Did Someone Miss the Memo?

Winnie Roshala, BA, CTR
CRGC Director of Data Quality Control

In December of 2015, CRGC issued a guideline document specific to histology coding for papillary carcinoma involving one of the following primary sites: Thyroid, bladder and breast. The guideline document provided abstractors with histology coding instructions based on the SEER Multiple Primary and Histology Rules and SINQ citations for each of the 3 primary sites mentioned. Based on these coding guidelines, we also corrected the data in the central database with erroneous histology codes. CRGC has taken this “fix and prevent” approach as part of our data quality assurance activities.

We recently ran the same data query to see if the histology coding error was still occurring, ***based on cases entered and coded after the guideline document was distributed on December 14, 2015.*** Specifically, we reviewed thyroid cases with a diagnosis of papillary carcinoma, NOS, erroneously coded to histology code 8050.

Unfortunately, we identified several reporting facilities who seemed to have “missed the memo” when it comes to coding histology for thyroid cases with papillary carcinoma. The good news is the majority of cases are being coded correctly following the guideline distribution and the number of miscoded cases is small! The data review revealed 25 histology coding errors involving 12 reporting facilities. Six of the twelve reporting facilities involved had more than one histology coding error. We needed to ensure that the reporting facilities who had multiple miscoded histologies were aware of the guideline document to code papillary carcinoma, NOS, of the thyroid. These reporting facilities were contacted, informed they had histology coding errors specific to papillary carcinoma of the thyroid. We reminded them of the coding guideline document and provided the link on the CRGC web site. No discrepancies are counted against the reporting facility as part of this data review.

The response from reporting facilities so far has been very favorable. Several reporting facilities have run reports of thyroid cases, some going back to 2007 to ensure they coded this histology correctly. Here are some of the responses from the reporting facilities we contacted:

“This type of info/input is helpful, specific, relevant and actionable. I would encourage similar efforts. We will all benefit from the review.”

"We have actually run a report all the way back to 2007 per the CRGC guideline and found quite a few that are miscoded. We actually found quite a few older cases that were coded to 8050. This is a great learning opportunity for all of us and I enjoy doing QC."

As a reminder, here is the link to the Papillary Carcinoma Coding Guideline: <http://crgc-cancer.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Papillary-Carcinoma-Coding-Guideline-12-14-15.pdf>

Here is the breakdown by region of CRGC cases entered with histology coding errors for papillary carcinoma of the thyroid, subsequent to the guideline document distribution:

Region	Number of Histology Coding Errors for Thyroid Cases After the Distribution of the Papillary Carcinoma Coding Guideline	Comments
2	5	All 5 cases came from the same reporting facility
3	5	All but 1 case came from the same health care system
4	4	All but 1 case came from the same reporting facility
5	8	4 cases from one health system, 2 cases from a community hospital, 1 case came from a regional medical center and 1 case came from another medical center

6	3	All but 1 case came from the same health care system
7/10	0	Excellent!
Total	25	