



START SMART CODING TIP

Neoplasms

Solid organ, hematopoietic & lymphatic coding

KEY REFERENCES

Guideline 1.C.2.n

Coding Clinic 2Q 2012

Two Families of Neoplasms

How a neoplasm behaves determines whether secondary sites are coded



C00-C80 • SOLID ORGAN

Have a single, localized point of origin – the **primary neoplasm** of that site.

Tend to spread to adjacent or remote sites, classified as **secondary / metastatic** neoplasms.

E.g., carcinoma of the lung with metastasis to the brain = a primary lung neoplasm that has spread to a secondary site in the brain.



C81-C96 • HEMATOPOIETIC & LYMPHATIC

May arise in a single site or in several sites simultaneously.

Tumor cells often circulate in the bloodstream and lymphatic system rather than staying confined to one site.

They do **not** 'spread' like solid tumors – so '**metastatic**' / '**secondary**' sites **should NOT be coded** for lymphatic or hematopoietic neoplasms.

Remission vs. Personal History

Leukemia, multiple myeloma & malignant plasma cell neoplasms

1

Distinguish neoplasms **in remission** from a **personal history** of the disease.

2

Leukemia categories and category **C90** (multiple myeloma & malignant plasma cell neoplasms) have codes indicating whether **remission** has been achieved.

3

Personal-history codes also exist: **Z85.6** (leukemia) and **Z85.79** (other malignant neoplasms of lymphoid, hematopoietic & related tissues).

4

If documentation is **unclear** whether remission has been achieved, **query the provider**.

STAGING

The TNM Scale

Often documented in oncology provider notes – usable for coding when authenticated

T – PRIMARY TUMOR

TX	T0	Tis	T1-T4
Primary tumor cannot be assessed	No evidence of primary tumor	Carcinoma in situ	Higher numbers = greater size, extent, penetration

N – REGIONAL LYMPH NODES

NX	N0	N1-N3
Regional lymph nodes cannot be assessed	No regional lymph node metastasis	Higher numbers = greater involvement

M – DISTANT METASTASIS

MX	M0	M1
Distant metastasis cannot be assessed	No distant metastasis	Distant metastasis present



CODING CLINIC • 2Q 2012

TNM staging can support code assignment when **authenticated by the attending physician**.

Example: SCC of the cervix staged **T4N1**. A secondary site can be assigned for the lymph-node mets: **T4N1 = C77.5** (secondary & unspecified malignant neoplasm of intrapelvic lymph nodes).

TNM documentation is often found in oncology provider notes.

Active Treatment vs. Watchful Waiting

Whether treatment is directed at the cancer drives current vs. history coding



ACTIVE TREATMENT

Current treatment directed at the site of the cancer – may include surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, or a combination.

Adjunct / adjuvant therapy following initial treatment, for the duration of that treatment.

Code the cancer as **current** while active treatment continues.



WATCHFUL WAITING

“Watchful waiting” / “active surveillance” applies **only** when no treatment of any kind is or has been directed at the cancer – monitoring for progression only.

E.g., prostate cancer s/p total prostatectomy with routine PSAs is **not current** – code as **“history of”** unless documentation indicates the cancer still exists.

TERMINOLOGY

"Metastatic To" vs. "Metastatic From"

The preposition tells you which site is primary and which is secondary



"METASTATIC TO"

The named site is the **secondary** site – e.g., metastatic cancer **to the lung** is a secondary neoplasm of the lung, **C78.0-**.

Also assign a code for the **primary neoplastic site** when the primary neoplasm is still present.



"METASTATIC FROM"

The named site is the **primary** site – e.g., metastatic cancer **from the breast** means the breast is primary, **C50.9-**.

Also assign a code for the **metastatic (secondary) site**.

Hematopoietic & Lymphatic Malignancies

Classifying lymph-node malignancies and coding spread beyond the nodes



CLASSIFICATION • C81-C88

4th character = the particular type of neoplasm.

5th character = nodes involved (except C86 & C88) and whether the lymphoma is in remission.

5th character **8** = malignancy involves lymph nodes of multiple sites.

EXAMPLE

C83.38 – Diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, lymph nodes of multiple sites, for DLBCL of intra-abdominal and intrathoracic nodes. Individual codes are not assigned for each node type.



SPREAD BEYOND THE NODES

When lymphoid tissue “metastasizes” beyond the lymph nodes, use a C81-C85 code with final character **9** for “**extranodal and solid organ sites**” – not a secondary neoplasm code for the organ.

EXAMPLE

C83.398 – DLBCL of other extranodal and solid organ sites, for metastasis of diffuse large B-cell lymphoma to the lung, brain, and left adrenal gland.