Skin Grafts: Donor vs. Recipient Site

Question:

I did a paramedian forehead flap (15731) and harvested a split thickness skin graft from the arm to close the donor defect site. I want to use 15120 (Split-thickness autograft, face, scalp, eyelids, mouth, neck, ears, orbits, genitalia, hands, feet, and/or multiple digits) for the STSG recipient site. My coder says I should use 15100 (Split-thickness autograft, trunk, arms, legs) for the STSG donor site. Please help us solve this disagreement.

Answer:

You are correct, Doctor. CPT says: “The following definition should be applied to those codes that reference “100 sq cm or 1% of body area of infants and children” when determining the involvement of body size: The measurement of 100 sq cm is applicable to adults and children 10 years of age and older; and percentages of body surface area apply to infants and children younger than 10 years of age. The measurements apply to the size of the recipient area.”

Notice the last sentence – the measurements apply to the size of the recipient site (not donor site).