Submucous Resection of the Inferior Turbinates

July 10, 2014

Question:

My physician and I disagree about the correct use of CPT code 30140 SMR of inferior turbinates. I have told him that he needs to document removal of bone, but he doesn’t agree and hasn’t been documenting this. Please help!

Answer:

You both are correct! In the submucous resection of the inferior turbinate (SMR) procedure, CPT 30140, the documentation should state that the physician entered or incised the mucosa and removed or reduced some of the bone and/or soft tissue. If he/she is reducing tissue volume only, without an incision, then an ablation code (30801 or 30802) is likely the correct code to use depending on whether it is superficial or intramural (i.e., submucosal). The submucous resection code (30140) of the inferior turbinate is a unilateral code, and may be appended with modifier 50 when performed bilaterally.

Remember, per CPT coding instructions, 30801, 30802 and 30930 (fracture inferior turbinate(s), therapeutic) are not to be reported with CPT 30130 (Excision inferior turbinate, partial or complete, any method) or 30140.