



Western Australian Coding Rule

0725/33 Facet joint cyst

Q.

How is a facet joint cyst coded?

A.

Assign M53.8- *Other specified dorsopathies* via Alphabetic Index:

Disorder (of)

...

- spine
- - specified NEC M53.8-

It's not appropriate to assign M25.8- (Alphabetic Index pathway: Cyst/joint NEC) per the Tabular List *Instructional* note at block M20-M25: **Excludes:** joints of the spine (M40-M54).

DECISION

Facet joint cyst should be coded M53.8x *Other specified dorsopathies*.

This WA Coding Rule 0725/33 *Facet joint cyst* supersedes WA Coding Rule 0413/05 *Facet joint cyst*.

This Rule has been modified to improve clarity; and to correspond with an update in ICD-10-AM/ACHI/ACS Eighth Edition.

Effective 1 July 2025, ICD-10-AM/ACHI/ACS 13th Ed.

As per the Patient Activity Data Policy (MP 0164/21) Western Australian Coding Rules must be followed.



Western Australian Coding Rule

0413/05 Facet joint cyst

Q.

Can you please confirm if it is still correct to code facet joint cyst to M53.9x & M25.88?

See previous query 4th edition database W40087: *Facet joint cyst cannot be coded primarily to M25.88 other specified.*

A.

A similar query was answered by the NCCC in the June 2012 Coding Q & A:

Q:

What code should be assigned for an osteophyte of the facet joint? The Index assigns **M25.7- Osteophyte.**

However, there is a note in the Tabular List at **M20-M25** which "*Excludes: joints of the spine (**M40-M54**)*".

A:

An osteophyte is the formation of a smooth bony outgrowth or spur which can occur in various bony sites, including the facet joints of the vertebrae. In the facet joints, osteophyte formation is the body's response to the degeneration of the cartilage lining of the joints as part of the normal wear and tear of the spine due to ageing and the disease process of osteoarthritis.

Clinical advice confirmed that osteophyte of facet joint should be classified to category **M47 Spondylosis** (not: **M25.7- Osteophyte.**).

This is supported in the classification where the note ("*Excludes: joints of the spine (**M40-M54**)*") at category **M20-M25 Other joint disorders** applies to all codes in that range and indicates that disorders of spinal joints are classified to category **M40-M54 Dorsopathies.**

Therefore, to correctly classify osteophyte of the facet joint, use the lead term ***Osteoarthritis***, follow the *See also* reference to ***Spondylosis*** and select the appropriate code under this lead term.

NCCC will consider improvements to the Alphabetic Index for this condition for a future edition of ICD-10-AM.

The Codefinder pathway follows the NCCC advice and assigns a code from M53.8x *Other*

Enter Key Word:

-- CYST



- CYST -- Cyst (colloid) (mucous) (retention) (simple)
 - - Cyst (colloid) (mucous) (retention) (simple)
 SPELL other type or site of cyst (type takes precedence over site)
 - - - Enter Key Word: -- J
 - - - - J – Joint
 - - - - Joint cyst -- Spine
 - - - - Spinal site -- Unspecified
 = M53.89 *Other specified dorsopathies, site unspecified*

Therefore, decision W40087 is no longer current. Follow instead the logic of the NCCC June 2012 Coding Q&A decision, and assign only a code from M40-M54. Follow the ICD-10-AM index pathway: disorder, spine, specified = M53.8x

DECISION

Facet joint cyst should be assigned to M53.8x *Other specified dorsopathies* by following the index pathway: disorder, spine, specified = M53.8x.

[Effective 19 April 2013, ICD-10-AM/ACHI/ACS 8th Ed.]