

Correct coding for laboratory procedures during assisted reproductive technology cycles

The Practice Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine

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New Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes for 2004 have been adopted for utilization with assisted reproductive technologies. It is important for professionals in the field of assisted reproductive technology (ART) to become familiar with them prior to their implementation. This document replaces the July 2002 American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) Practice Guideline *Correct Coding for Laboratory Procedures During Assisted Reproductive Technology*. (Fertil Steril® 2004;81:1168–71. ©2004 by American Society for Reproductive Medicine.)

BACKGROUND

Physicians should code accurately for the services they provide and the diagnoses that justify those services. Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) 2004 is a listing of procedures performed by physicians and other health care professionals and is maintained by the American Medical Association (AMA). It is generally accepted as the universal reporting system for services performed in the United States as well as many other countries around the world. Each procedure in CPT is reported with a five-digit code that may be further explained by the addition of various two-digit modifiers.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In vitro fertilization (IVF) involves a multitude of complex laboratory procedures performed over an interval of one to seven days. These procedures involve both the male and female gametes as well as the subsequent embryos that develop. Current Procedural Terminology initially had only one code to describe the laboratory procedures that took place from the time the oocyte was aspirated from the ovary until the embryo was transferred to the uterus or was cryopreserved. A single code quickly became inadequate to describe the many different components of work involved as the variety and complexity of assisted repro-

ductive technology (ART) expanded. Several codes were added in 1997, however technology has advanced to the point that these codes were inadequate to describe all of the work performed in a typical ART cycle. Consequently, a number of new CPT codes have been established to describe each of the procedures that may now be performed. These codes also represent new additional work that was not recognized when the codes were first presented to CPT.

This document outlines the proper use of individual and specific codes for each component of the laboratory work involved in an IVF cycle. Bundling of multiple procedures into one or two codes is no longer appropriate because each of these codes describes specific work involved in the laboratory during an IVF cycle.

The laboratory part of the work in an IVF cycle may involve any or all of several procedures currently defined by CPT. In general, procedures involving the oocyte or embryo are coded for the female partner, whereas those directly involving sperm alone are coded for the male partner. Alternatively, all of these procedures may be applied to the female.

The following CPT codes (89250–89356, as well as CPT level III codes 0058T and 0059T) may be applicable in the IVF cycle. Codes are presented in the order they are listed in the CPT book, rather than the sequence in

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which they are typically performed in an IVF cycle.

INDIVIDUAL ART CODES

89250 Culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s), less than 4 days

This code describes only the culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s) for a duration of culture of <4 days. It includes the day of insemination but not the procedure involved with the insemination (conventional and/or assisted fertilization [89268, 89280, 89281]). It does not include oocyte identification from follicular fluid (89254) or preparation of embryo for transfer (any method) (89255). It does not include assisted embryo hatching, microtechniques (any method) (89253), cryopreservation; embryo(s) (89258), or oocyte/embryo biopsy (89290, 89291). This code may be reported whether culturing fresh oocyte(s)/embryo(s) or previously cryopreserved oocyte(s)/embryo(s).

89251 Culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s), less than 4 days; with co-culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s)

This code includes all of the work described by culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s) (89250) with the additional work of co-culturing the embryos with feeder cells (granulosa, endometrial, tubal, etc.). This code would also include the work involved in preparing the culture system. This code is reported instead of 89250 when co-culture is utilized. It does not include oocyte identification from follicular fluid (89254) or preparation of embryo for transfer (any method) (89255). It does not include assisted embryo hatching, microtechniques (any method) (89253), cryopreservation; embryo (89258), or oocyte/embryo biopsy (89290, 89291).

89253 Assisted embryo hatching, microtechniques (any method)

This code describes any micromanipulation technique used to assist hatching of the embryo from the zona pellucida. It includes using acid Tyrode's solution, laser, or PZD performed for this purpose. It is distinct from codes for culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s) (89250), culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s); with co-culture of embryos (89251), extended culture (89272), and assisted oocyte fertilization, microtechnique (89280, 89281) and should be reported separately.

89254 Oocyte identification from follicular fluid

This code refers to the work of identifying the oocytes contained in the follicular fluid aspirated at the time of the oocyte retrieval. This does not include any of the work involved in follicle puncture for oocyte retrieval, (any method) (58970) or the subsequent work of culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s) (89250), the co-culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s) (89251), or extended culture (89272). This code is reported only once per ART cycle regardless of the number of oocytes identified.

89255 Preparation of embryo for transfer (any method)

This code includes the following work: removing the embryo(s) from culture, preparing the embryo(s) for transfer, loading the embryo(s) into an appropriate catheter, transporting the embryo(s) to the transfer room for transfer to the patient, and examination of the catheter after transfer to ensure that no embryo(s) are retained. This code does not include the work of culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s) (89250), or co-culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s) (89251), extended culture (89272), and is not a part of the work involved in embryo transfer, intrauterine (58974) or gamete, zygote, or embryo intrafallopian transfer (any method) (58976). It also does not include thawing of cryopreserved embryo(s) (89352) or assisted embryo hatching (89253). This code would be utilized for preparation of either a fresh or cryopreserved embryo.

89257 Sperm identification from aspiration (other than seminal fluid)

This code includes the work involved in identification of sperm from an aspirate, usually from the vas deferens or epididymis. It specifically excludes identification of sperm from seminal fluid; such work is described by other codes, including semen analysis; presence and/or motility of sperm including Huhner test (postcoital) (89300), semen analysis; motility and count (not including Huhner test) (89310), or semen analysis; complete (volume, count, motility, and differential) (89320). This code includes only the work of identifying sperm and does not include the work of assisted oocyte fertilization, microtechnique (any method) (89280, 89281).

89258 Cryopreservation; embryo(s)

This code includes the work of cryopreservation of the embryo(s), regardless of the stage of embryo development. It does not include culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s) (89250), or culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s); with co-culture of embryos (89251), extended culture (89272), or any subsequent charge for storage of the embryos (89342) or any equipment or supplies required for long-term storage. It also does not include subsequent preparation of embryo for transfer (89255).

If embryos are cryopreserved on more than one day during the IVF cycle (i.e., pronuclear stage, cleavage stage, and/or blastocyst), it is appropriate to submit this code for each day that additional work is required.

89259 Cryopreservation; sperm

This code includes the work involved in cryopreservation of sperm. It does not include:

- semen analysis; presence and/or motility of sperm including Huhner test (postcoital) (89300);
- semen analysis; motility and count (89310);

- semen analysis; complete (volume, count, motility, and differential) (89320);
- sperm identification from aspiration (other than seminal fluid) (89257);
- sperm identification from testis tissue, fresh or cryopreserved (89264);
- sperm isolation; simple prep (e.g., sperm wash and swim-up) for insemination or diagnosis with semen analysis (89260);
- sperm isolation; complex prep (e.g., Percoll gradient, albumin gradient) for insemination or diagnosis with semen analysis (89261).

It also does not include any subsequent charge for storage (89343) or any equipment or supplies required for long-term storage.

0058T Cryopreservation of reproductive tissue, ovarian

0059T Cryopreservation of reproductive tissue, oocyte

These are both Category III codes. This category of CPT codes is for procedures that are still considered experimental and not widely done. Category III status allows the tracking of the utilization of a code. A Category III code may be converted to a Category I code if it becomes evident that the procedure is in widespread use and is no longer deemed experimental. These codes do not include the thawing (89354, 89356) or annual storage (89344, 89346).

89260 Sperm isolation; simple prep (e.g., sperm wash and swim-up) for insemination or diagnosis with semen analysis

This code includes the work involved in sperm wash and swim-up for either insemination or diagnosis. It includes semen analysis (89300, 89310, 89320); therefore, semen analysis is not reported separately. This code is used for any simple prep.

89261 Sperm isolation; complex prep (e.g., Percoll gradient, albumin gradient) for insemination or diagnosis with semen analysis

This code includes the work involved in sperm isolation from a complex prep for either insemination or diagnosis. It also includes semen analysis (89300, 89310, 89320); therefore, semen analysis would not be submitted separately. The density gradients cited are only examples. This code applies to any complex prep.

89264 Sperm identification from testis tissue, fresh or cryopreserved

This code includes sperm identification and isolation from fresh or frozen testis tissue. This code is distinct from the code for sperm identification from aspiration (other than seminal fluid) (89257). It does not include work done with sperm after identification and isolation. Assisted oocyte fertilization, microtechnique (89280, 89281) or cryopreservation; sperm (89259) should be coded separately.

89268 Insemination of oocytes

This code includes the work involved in conventional in vitro insemination of oocytes. It does not include culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s) (89250, 89251, 89272); sperm isolation (89260, 89261, 89264, 89257); assisted embryo hatching (89253); or thawing of cryopreserved sperm/semen or testicular tissue (89353, 89354). It also is not included in assisted oocyte fertilization (89280, 89281) and both should be reported if both are performed on an infertile couple undergoing ART.

89272 Extended culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s), 4–7 days

This code applies to the continuation of oocyte/embryo culture in excess of 3 days and is reported in addition to the culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s), less than 4 days (89250, 89251). This does not include oocyte identification from follicular fluid (89254), preparation of the embryo for transfer (89255), insemination/assisted oocyte fertilization (89280, 89281, 89268), assisted embryo hatching (89253), cryopreservation of embryo (89258), or biopsy of oocyte/embryo (89290).

89280 Assisted oocyte fertilization, microtechnique; less than or equal to 10 oocytes

89281 ; greater than 10 oocytes

This code is restricted to assisted oocyte fertilization such as intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), sub-zonal insertion (SUZI), or partial zona dissection (PZD). It is not included in the code for culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s) (89250, 89251, 89272) and should be reported in addition to these codes when both procedures are performed. This does not include conventional insemination of oocyte(s) and both may be reported on the same patient if both procedures are performed. These codes do not include the sperm isolation (89260, 89261, 89264, 89257) nor do they include assisted hatching (89253). Either 89280 or 89281 would be reported based on the number of oocytes undergoing assisted fertilization.

89290 Biopsy, oocyte polar body or embryo blastomere, microtechnique (for pre-implantation genetic diagnosis); less than or equal to 5 embryos

89291 ; greater than 5 embryos

These 2 codes include only the work involved in the actual polar body biopsy or blastomere biopsy. This does not include culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s) (89250, 89251, 89272), oocyte identification from follicular fluid (89254), preparation of the embryo for transfer (89255), insemination/assisted oocyte fertilization (89268, 89280, 89281), assisted embryo hatching (89253), or cryopreservation of embryo (89258). These 2 codes also do not include any of the testing

that might be done on the cell removed from the oocyte or embryo.

89335 Cryopreservation, reproductive tissue, testicular

This code includes the work involved in cryopreservation of reproductive tissue from the testicle. It does not include:

- semen analysis; presence and/or motility of sperm including Huhner test (postcoital) (89300);
- semen analysis; motility and count (not including Huhner test) (89310);
- semen analysis; complete (volume, count, motility, and differential) (89320);
- sperm identification from aspiration (other than seminal fluid) (89257);
- sperm identification from testis tissue, fresh or cryopreserved (89264);
- sperm isolation; simple prep (e.g., sperm wash and swim-up) for insemination or diagnosis with semen analysis (89260);
- sperm isolation; complex prep (e.g., Percoll gradient, albumin gradient) for insemination or diagnosis with semen analysis (89261).

It also does not include any subsequent charge for storage (89344), thawing (89354), or any equipment or supplies required for long-term storage.

89342 Storage, (per year); embryo(s)

89343; sperm/semen

89344; reproductive tissue, testicular/ovarian

89346; oocyte(s)

These codes are for storage of each identified item. This standardizes the storage charges to a per year basis. These codes do not include the cryopreservation of the item or thawing.

89352 Thawing of cryopreserved; embryo(s)

89353; sperm/semen, each aliquot

89354; reproductive tissue, testicular/ovarian

89356; oocyte(s), each aliquot

These codes are for thawing of each identified item. These codes do not include the cryopreservation of the item or storage. The thawing of sperm/semen and oocyte are per aliquot. If thawed embryo(s) or oocyte(s) are cultured beyond the date of the thaw, then it would be appropriate to code for culture of oocyte(s)/embryo(s) (89250, 89251, 89272).

SUMMARY

The CPT codes currently available for practitioners utilizing ART procedures have been greatly expanded to more accurately describe the work that is being performed. As changes take place in this rapidly advancing area, the Society will continue to lead the effort to add additional codes to describe the work related to ART.

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