
Documentation Dissection

PREOPERATIVE DIAGNOSIS: Temporal giant cell arteritis and headache, left side of the head.

POSTOPERATIVE DIAGNOSIS: Temporal arteritis and headache, left side of the head ^[1].

NAME OF PROCEDURE: Left superficial temporal artery biopsy ^[2].

OPERATIVE REPORT: The patient was taken to the angiographic suite, placed in supine position on angiographic table. A timeout was completed prior to initiating the procedure and when all participants were in agreement, the operation was begun. The skin over the previously marked temporal artery branch was anesthetized with 4 ml of 1% plain Xylocaine. Incision was made in this area and dissection exposed the artery. The artery was ligated proximally and distally with 4-0 Ethilon ties. The intervening artery was excised ^[3]. The wound was irrigated and closed with running 4-0 Monocryl subcuticular closure. Sterile dressing applied. The patient discharged to the recovery area in good condition.

ESTIMATED BLOOD LOSS: Less than 10 mL.

The artery was not nodular, was pulsatile, but was tender.

^[1] The postoperative diagnosis is temporal arteritis on the left side of the head. A headache is a symptom of temporal arteritis.

^[2] Planned procedure is a left superficial temporal artery biopsy. Verify procedure in the body of the operative report.

^[3] The temporal artery was identified and ligated proximally and distally. The portion ligated was excised.

What are the CPT® and ICD-10-CM codes reported?

CPT® Code: 37609-LT

ICD-10-CM Code: M31.6

Rationales:

CPT®: The procedure performed is a ligation and biopsy of the left superficial temporal artery. In the CPT Index, locate Ligation/Temporal, which refers to 37609. In the Tabular List, read any guidelines and verify the code. This leads to code 37609, Ligation or biopsy, temporal artery. This code would also be assigned if a ligation was not performed, and a biopsy was performed instead. The modifier LT is appended to the code because the temporal artery is on either the left or the right side of the head.

ICD-10-CM: In the ICD-10-CM Alphabetic Index, locate Arteritis/temporal, giant cell, which refers to M31.6. Verification in the Tabular List identifies M31.6 *Giant cell arteritis*, as the correct code. Giant cell arteritis is more commonly known as temporal arteritis. Arteritis is a systemic inflammation of the artery that can cause visual disturbances, headache, neck pain, and scalp tenderness.