

Q&A-Medicine: Neurology and Neuromuscular Procedures

CPT® Assistant.

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Question: Code 95816 indicates that the patient is awake and drowsy. How is the patient's state of drowsiness achieved?

Answer: For code 95816, Electroencephalogram (EEG); including recording awake and drowsy, the awake and drowsy "procedure" is performed in a recliner chair or bed. The patient is connected to the recording equipment through wires attached to the scalp. The patient is asked to lie back and relax. Recordings are made for 20 to 40 minutes with the patient warm and comfortable, and the environment quiet and dark. Patients are normally awake for a portion of the recording and may become drowsy during another portion. EEG is a sensitive indicator of drowsiness. Code 95816 is reported when the awake portion of the EEG procedure is performed, irrespective of whether the report describes the drowsiness portion of the recording. As indicated in the CPT 2023 code set guidelines for routine electroencephalography, "EEG codes 95812-95822 include hyperventilation and/or photic stimulation when appropriate." Hyperventilation and/or photic stimulation is not a mandatory part of the EEG testing, but it is performed only when medically necessary and not contraindicated by a patient's other medical circumstances. It is not appropriate to report these services separately because they are an integral part of the EEG service performed. The absence of hyperventilation and/or photic stimulation and/or drowsiness does not preclude the reporting of code 95816.

Question: Would it be appropriate to report code 95822 for an EEG that includes recording the patient both awake and sleep?

Answer: No, code 95822, Electroencephalogram (EEG); recording in coma or sleep only, would not be reported. Code 95819, Electroencephalogram (EEG); including recording awake and asleep, would be reported for the scenario described above. Sleeping medication might be used to help the patient fall asleep. The patient may have been asked to reduce their sleep hours during the previous night and to avoid stimulants (such as caffeine) on the day of testing to fall asleep more easily during testing. The EEG is performed with the patient in a recliner chair or bed. The patient is connected to the recording

equipment through wires attached to the scalp. The patient is asked to lie back and relax. Recordings are made for 20 to 40 minutes with the patient warm and comfortable, and the environment quiet and dark. Patients normally are awake for a portion of the recording and may fall asleep during another portion. EEG is a sensitive indicator of sleep. Code 95819 would be reported if the patient falls asleep; however, it is permissible to report code 95819 if a sleep study was intended and the procedure followed but sleep was not achieved despite all best efforts. As indicated in the CPT 2023 guidelines for routine electroencephalography, “EEG codes 95812-95822 include hyperventilation and/or photic stimulation when appropriate.” Hyperventilation and/or photic stimulation is not a mandatory part of the EEG testing, but it is performed only when medically necessary and not contraindicated by a patient’s other medical circumstances. It is not appropriate to report these services separately because they are considered an integral part of the EEG service performed. The absence of hyperventilation and/or photic stimulation does not preclude the reporting of code 95819.