

Immunotherapy Code

Organization	Field Name	ID	Required
KCR	Immunotherapy Code (ImmunoCode)	50210	yes
NAACCR	RX Summ--BRM	1410	yes

Field Length: 1

Record '1' if immunotherapy was administered as first course treatment at this or any other facilities. Immunotherapy consists of biological or chemical agents that alter the immune system or change the host's response to tumor cells.

Types of immunotherapy

Cancer Vaccines: Cancer vaccines are still in the experimental phase and are not coded in this data item. They may be coded in the field Other Therapy. Currently clinical trials use cancer vaccines for brain, breast, colon, kidney, lung, melanoma and ovary.

Interferons: Interferons belong to a group of proteins called cytokines. They are produced naturally by the white blood cells in the body. Interferon-alpha is able to slow tumor growth directly as well as activate the immune system. It is used for a number of cancers including multiple myeloma, chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML), hairy cell leukemia, and malignant melanoma.

Interleukins (IL-2) are often used to treat kidney cancer and melanoma.

Monoclonal Antibodies: Prior to 2005, monoclonal antibodies were coded as immunotherapy. Monoclonal antibodies are produced in a laboratory. The artificial antibodies are injected into the patient to seek out and disrupt cancer cell activities and to enhance the immune response against the cancer. For example, Rituximab (Rituxan) may be used for non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and trastuzumab (Herceptin) may be used for certain breast cancers.

With the introduction of SEER Rx in 2005 for coding systemic therapy, monoclonal antibodies are coded as chemotherapy if they act as cytostatic agents (such as Rituxan and Herceptin) or as radioisotopes if they deliver cytotoxic radioisotopes to the cells (such as Bexxar and Zevalin).

Effective with diagnoses in 2005 and later, use the SEER Rx program (available from web site: <http://seer.cancer.gov/tools/seerrx/>) to identify immunotherapeutic agents. For pre-2005 cases, refer to [Appendix H](#) and to the Self-Instructional Manual for Tumor Registrars: Book 8 - Antineoplastic Drugs, Third Edition.