

# ICD-10-CM Will Improve the Tracking of Breast Cancer

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by Melanie Endicott

From pink gloves on the football field to pink night lighting on skyscrapers—not to mention the influx of pink clothing everywhere you look—it's no secret that October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Most people have been touched by breast cancer in some way—whether personally or through a family member or a friend. Statistics on the [National Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc.](#) website state that one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. With such a high incidence, it's imperative that the United States has a robust code set to effectively track these diagnoses of breast cancer in both men and women.

Currently, the ICD-9-CM code set provides specific codes for the different areas of the female breast affected by cancer, but it does not differentiate right vs. left breast. The table below compares the ICD-9-CM codes for malignant neoplasm of the female breast to ICD-10-CM codes. Having the additional detail of laterality in ICD-10-CM will be very helpful in tracking recurrences of breast cancer of the same breast.

Malignant Neoplasm of Female Breast	
ICD-9-CM (Category 174)	ICD-10-CM (Category C50)
Nipple and areola	Nipple and areola – right, left, unspecified
Central portion	Central portion – right, left, unspecified
Upper-inner quadrant	Upper-inner quadrant – right, left, unspecified
Lower-inner quadrant	Lower-inner quadrant – right, left, unspecified
Upper-outer quadrant	Upper-outer quadrant – right, left, unspecified
Lower-outer quadrant	Lower-outer quadrant – right, left, unspecified
Axillary tail	Axillary tail – right, left, unspecified
Other specified sites of female breast	Overlapping sites – right, left, unspecified
Unspecified site	Unspecified site – right, left, unspecified

According to the [American Cancer Society](#), breast cancer is about 100 times less common among men than among women; however, about 2,360 new cases of male breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in 2014. And about 430 men will die from breast cancer this year alone. There is a vast difference in the number and specificity of codes available in ICD-9-CM vs. ICD-10-CM to report male breast cancer.

The table below shows that there is only one site-specific code for male breast cancer (nipple and areola), whereas ICD-10-CM has codes for all of the same sites that are available for female breast cancer. Having these additional site-specific codes will enhance the research that can be done from coded data on where breast cancer is occurring in males.

Malignant Neoplasm of Male Breast	
ICD-9-CM (Category 175)	ICD-10-CM (Category C50)
Nipple and areola	Nipple and areola – right, left, unspecified
	Central portion – right, left, unspecified
	Upper-inner quadrant – right, left, unspecified
	Lower-inner quadrant – right, left, unspecified
	Upper-outer quadrant – right, left, unspecified
	Lower-outer quadrant – right, left, unspecified
	Axillary tail – right, left, unspecified
	Overlapping sites – right, left, unspecified
Other and unspecified sites	Unspecified site – right, left, unspecified

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