

LIMB TEMPERATURE DOCUMENTATION

“ Cold extremities are probably the most frequent cause of misdiagnosis in clinical electromyography.”

Recommended AANEM Practice Guidelines:

Limb temperatures should be monitored and maintained.

Minimal temperature changes can greatly affect Nerve Conduction Studies (NCS). At lower Limb temperatures, amplitudes become higher, distal latencies are prolonged and conduction velocities are slowed.

Recommended limb temperatures:

$\geq 32^{\circ}\text{C}$ Upper extremities

$\geq 30^{\circ}\text{C}$ Lower extremities

Influence Physician Behavior

John E. Robinton, M.D., OCM's Medical Director, Neurophysiology, and John J. Kelly, M.D. a member of OCM's Neurodiagnostic Medical Advisory Board were selected to present OCM quality improvement results at the annual meeting of the American Association of Electrodiagnostic Medicine (AAEM) in San Francisco, CA, on September 19, 2003. The American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodiagnostic Medicine (AANEM; formerly AAEM) is the primary organization for electrodiagnostic education in the United States developing policies, practice parameters, guidelines and ongoing education for its membership.

OCM's EMG & NCS Services began in May 1999, with the adoption of AAEM Recommended Policy for Electrodiagnostic Medicine as the standard for EMG and NCS Reports. The quality improvement objective was to determine the effect of a required documentation format with ongoing education to improve quality of EMG and NCS reports during the past four years. Several important quality indicators were monitored.

Of the 1,023 applicants who submitted sample reports for evaluation by OCM's Credentialing Committee **only 14%** documented limb temperature monitoring. Through educational communication from OCM's Clinical Services Department, this number rose to **61%** in twenty-one states for 2003. Providers' reports continue to be audited for limb temperature monitoring with improvement to 70 percent in 2005, 80 percent in 2006, 83 percent in both 2007 and 2008.

Clinical Services' quality improvement goals for are to increase the percentage of providers who document limb temperature monitoring and adhere to the AAEM guidelines. This will be achieved by reviewing reports, data analysis and ongoing feedback to the providers. Outcomes clearly indicate an improvement in EMG's and NCS's, showing that through education, OCM's network can compliment the efforts of AANEM in this important arena.

SOURCES:

Jablecki, C.K. et al, Practice Parameter: Electrodiagnostic Studies in Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Neurology 58, June, 2002, pg. 1590.

Rutkove, S.B., The Effects of Temperature in Neuromuscular Electrophysiology, AAEM mini monograph # 14, July, 2001.

Wilbourn, A.J., Pitfalls in Nerve Conduction Studies, AAEM 1995 AAEM Course A: Nerve Conduction Studies - Fundamentals, pg. 41.



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