

Joint Commission Vendor Listserv Posted 10/28/08
Abstraction Clarification - Data Element Surgical Incision Time

ORYX: Clarification regarding "surgical incision time" data element effective for 10/1/2008 through 03/31/2009 discharges

As hospitals have begun to abstract medical records for acute inpatient discharges starting with October 1, 2008, several questions have been raised about the data element "Surgical Incision Time" that we believe need further clarification.

By definition, the data element "Surgical Incision Time" is "The time the initial incision was made for the principal procedure." If an "incision time" is documented in the record, that is the time that should be collected for abstraction purposes. In the current manual, the term "incision time" was included in the list under First Priority, instead of above the other terms. The intent of the Specifications Manual for National Hospital Inpatient Quality Measures Version 2.5b was to clarify what options would be acceptable for "Surgical Incision Time" if this was NOT documented in the record. It was not intended to replace or reposition "Surgical Incision Time" lower on the list of priorities. The abstractor is to continue regarding the term "incision time" as the first priority. If the incision time is not documented, the earliest time associated with the other first priority terms should be entered. If a first priority term is not used, the abstractor should look for the second priority terms, etc.

Questions regarding this clarification of the "surgical incision time" data element should be directed to <http://manual.jointcommission.org>