Spring into Shape
Spinal Release Procedures

Coding Clinic 2019

Decompression procedures in association with other spinal procedures

If the decompression laminectomy was performed to treat a separately documented indication, such as spinal stenosis, and the laminectomy is not the approach to the procedure, the release procedure can be coded in addition to the additional procedure such as with a spinal fusion. In contrast the laminectomy should not be coded separately if it was performed to prepare the operative site.

References: Coding Clinic 2019,1St QTR, p.30

Generally speaking spinal decompression surgery is intended to release symptoms caused by compression on the spinal cord and/or nerve roots by various ailments, such as spinal stenosis.

Coding ICD-10-PCS spinal decompression procedures will depend on what body part is being decompressed.
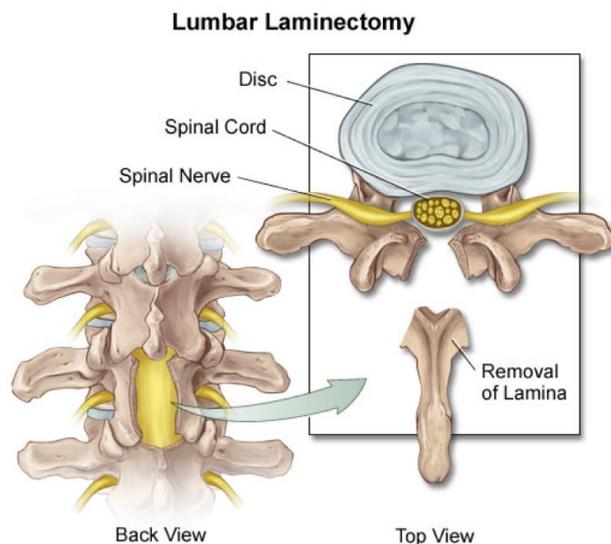
If both the nerve root and the spinal cord are being decompressed both the nerve root release and spinal cord release can be coded.

Lumbar Laminectomy

Disc
Spinal Cord
Spinal Nerve
Removal of Lamina
Back View
Top View

https://cloud2.spineuniverse.com/sites/default/files/imagecache/largecontent/wysiwyg_imageupload/3998/2016/10/21/lumbarlaminectomy.png

Nerve Roots

Decompression of the spine from L4 down to L5 indicates release of the nerve roots. Therefore, the lumbar nerve root body part would be assigned.

Spinal cord

A central decompression indicates the spinal cord was release. Likewise if the "Thecal sac" or "Dural sac" is being released this documentation also indicates the spinal cord was released and the spinal cord body part should be utilized.

References: Coding Clinic 2019, 1st QTR, p. 28; Coding Clinic 2018, 3rd QTR, p.30

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