Elevated Liver Function Test

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Why a new code?

- Healthy 12 year-old has routine blood tests as part of a sports physical. Enzymes AST, ALT and LDH come back elevated. Additional testing is ordered to determine cause of elevated liver enzymes
  - AST = aspartate aminotransferase
  - ALT = alanine aminotransferase — liver
  - LDH = lactate dehydrogenase — tissue
- 4 year-old properly restrained passenger is involved in a moderate speed vehicle collision. Child has no physical findings or complaints but routine trauma labs show elevated AST and ALT. Child now has a CT scan with IV contrast. Results do not show any injury

Why a new code?

- In the first case the only reason for obtaining additional tests was to determine why the liver transaminases and LDH were elevated. There isn't any other reason for the encounter or lab tests.
- In the second case elevated AST and ALT have some predictive value in determining intra-abdominal injury, e.g. liver laceration. Since there aren't any other findings or complaints there is no other justification for obtaining the CT scan.

Why a new code?

- In an asymptomatic patient elevated levels alone could require additional studies looking for
  - liver enzymes:
    - occult neoplasia
    - occult infection
  - LDH
    - occult neoplasia
    - occult infection
    - occult skeletal and cardiac muscle injury
    - anemia

Specific enzyme elevation

Current code

- R74.0 Nonspecific elevation of levels of transaminase and lactic acid dehydrogenase [LDH]

Proposed codes

R74.0 Nonspecific elevation of levels of transaminase and lactic acid dehydrogenase [LDH]

New code **R74.01** Abnormal levels of liver transaminase

- *Add* Abnormal levels of alanine transaminase (ALT)
- *Add* Abnormal levels of aspartate transaminase (AST)

New code **R74.02** Elevation of levels lactic acid dehydrogenase [LDH]

Questions?