Visual Evoked Potential Testing for Pediatric Populations in the Primary Care Setting — Commercial/Medicaid

Last Review Date: March 12, 2021     Number: MG.MM.ME.41aC8v2

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Definition/Background

Visual evoked potentials (VEPs) are electrophysiologic responses to stimulation by either patterned or unpatterned visual stimuli. Responses evoked by patterned stimuli are “pattern” VEPs or PVEPs. Responses evoked by unpatterned stimuli are “flash” VEPs or FVEPs.

VEP testing consists of electrodes placed on the scalp, over the occipital lobes of the brain, to detect electrical response in the visual cortex in response to visual stimuli.

While VEP testing is utilized primarily as a diagnostic tool for the neurological assessment of the visual system so that specific ophthalmologic or neurologic abnormalities may be identified, its use in the routine office setting has become increasingly more commonplace (though tests such as the Snellen chart and picture optotypes remain the established screening modalities for conditions such as amblyopia, strabismus and defects in visual acuity).

Half-field PVEP testing is more sensitive than full-field testing in detecting lesions of the visual system at chiasmal or postchiasmal sites. Such testing can often clarify the cause of ambiguous findings on full-field testing. Half-field testing may demonstrate visual pathway abnormality in the presence of normal full-field PVEPs, but requires greater patient cooperation and is technically more demanding than full-field testing.

FVEPs are less sensitive than PVEPs to dysfunction of the visual projection pathways. Their use in clinical testing is generally limited to subjects with severe refractive errors or opacity of ocular media who cannot visually resolve a pattern stimulus and subjects who are too young or too uncooperative to reliably fixate on a pattern stimulus. (Pattern VEP testing can be successfully performed on infants and toddlers but may be quite time consuming)

Related Medical Guideline

Visual Electrophysiology Testing

Guideline

Members are eligible for VEP testing to screen for visual disorders as follows:

1. ≤ 3 years of age
2. 1-time per year
Limitations/Exclusions
Automated VEP screening is not considered medically necessary, as there is insufficient evidence of therapeutic value.

Applicable Procedures Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95930</td>
<td>Visual evoked potential (VEP) checkerboard or flash testing, central nervous system except glaucoma, with interpretation and report</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Applicable ICD-10 Diagnosis Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Z13.5</td>
<td>Encounter for screening for eye and ear disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z13.85</td>
<td>Encounter for screening for other nervous system disorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Z13.89</td>
<td>Encounter for screening for other disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Z13.9</td>
<td>Encounter for screening, unspecified</td>
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Revision History

Aug. 19, 2021  Added “Commercial/Medicaid” to title

References

Specialty-matched clinical peer review.