ACUPUNCTURE
SUR702.005
BlueReview POSTED DATE: 3/23/2004
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COVERAGE:

Acupuncture or electroacupuncture in any form is considered experimental or investigational.

DESCRIPTION:

Acupuncture is an ancient method of healing originating from Chinese traditional medicine. It consists of the insertion of needles into the body at specific points that have been shown to be effective in the treatment of specific health problems. Acupuncture has been used to:

- induce anesthesia,
- relieve pain,
- alleviate withdrawal symptoms of substance abusers,
- treat various non-painful disorders.
- These points of needle placement have been mapped over the past 2000 years.

Recently electromagnetic research has confirmed their locations. Electroacupuncture refers to the attachment of wires to acupuncture needles to provide low voltage electrical energy. This electrical energy is a substitute for the manual “tweedling” (e.g. turning, twisting) of standard acupuncture. (Electroacupuncture is sometimes referred to as transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation acupuncture or TENS acupuncture.)

RATIONALE:

A recent MEDLINE search through April of 2003 does not show consistent results for either acupuncture or electroacupuncture. In current literature, most physicians continue to be skeptical about certain treatments, citing a lack of clinical information. Before there is widespread acceptance of Acupuncture in the conventional medical establishment, more clinical research needs to be provided in a teaching hospital environment.

REFERENCES

- Greif, R., Lasiny, S., et al “Transcutaneous electrical stimulation of an auricular acupuncture point decreases anesthetic requirement.”

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DISCLAIMER:

State and federal law, as well as contract language, including definitions and specific inclusions/exclusions, takes precedence over Medical Policy and must be considered first in determining coverage. The member’s contract benefits in effect on the date that services are rendered must be used. Any benefits are subject to the payment of premiums for the date on which services are rendered. Medical technology is constantly evolving, and we reserve the right to review and update Medical Policy periodically.

HMO Blue Texas physicians who are contracted/affiliated with a capitated IPA/medical group must contact the IPA/medical group for information regarding HMO claims/reimbursement information and other general polices and procedures.

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