EXTRACRANIAL ARTERIAL STUDIES
MED202.020

COVERAGE:

Extracranial Arterial Studies using duplex scans are considered medically necessary for the following indications:

- Asymptomatic carotid bruit
- Focal cerebral or ocular transient ischemic attacks
- Prior stroke
- Before major cardiac or vascular surgery when there’s history of a previous neurologic event, suggestive of ischemia
- Aphasia
- Suspected injury to carotid artery
- Aneurysm (artery of neck)
- Mechanical complication of vascular device, implant, graft, including suspected infections involving the extracranial cerebral arteries.
- Syncope and collapse thought secondary to an extracranial cerebral artery cause
- Retinal ischemia or vascular occlusion
- Transient monocular visual loss
- Posterior circulation insufficiency symptoms
- Cervical mass
- Follow up studies after carotid endarterectomy or in patients with internal carotid stenosis of less than 60% diameter reduction.

Doppler ultrasound with spectral analysis is considered medically necessary as a diagnostic extracranial arterial study.

Coverage of Carotid Phonoangiography and Periorbital Doppler are considered not medically necessary as these tests have been supplanted by more accurate diagnostic testing.

DESCRIPTION:

Extracranial Arterial Studies are methods of measuring blood flow in the arteries and capillaries without introduction of devices through the skin. These tests aid in evaluation and diagnosing disease in these arteries.

- Carotid Phonoangiography - a formerly common diagnostic test that is rarely used today. A sensitive microphone is placed on the neck; very close to the carotid artery, to record generated sounds.

- Doppler ultrasound spectral analyses - The two most common types of doppler ultrasound transducers are continuous wave doppler and pulsed-wave doppler. Continuous wave doppler units use two crystals, one to send and one to receive the echoes. The transmitter inputs a continuous sinusoidal wave. The receiver detects the shift. An audible sound is created and recorded by either an analog recorder or spectral analyzer. Spectral analysis
separates the signal into individual components and assigns a relative importance.

- Duplex scans – an ultrasonic scanning procedure with display of both two-dimensional structure and motion with time and doppler ultrasonic signal documentation with spectrum analysis and/or color flow velocity mapping or imaging. Duplex is a term used to describe the scanning device in most pulsed wave doppler systems.

RATIONALE:

The use of a simple hand-held or other doppler device that does not produce hard copy output, or that does not permit analysis of bidirectional vascular flow, is considered part of the physical examination of the vascular system and is not separately reimbursable.

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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