blue of california

Medical Policy

T-Wave Alternans	
Type: Investigational / Experimental	**Policy Specific Section:** Medicine
Original Policy Date: December 1, 2005	**Effective Date:** October 9, 2013*

A review of the literature through August of 2013 does not change the position statement. This policy is no longer scheduled for routine literature review and update.

Definitions of Decision Determinations

Medically Necessary: A treatment, procedure or drug is medically necessary only when it has been established as safe and effective for the particular symptoms or diagnosis, is not investigational or experimental, is not being provided primarily for the convenience of the patient or the provider, and is provided at the most appropriate level to treat the condition.

Investigational/Experimental: A treatment, procedure or drug is investigational when it has not been recognized as safe and effective for use in treating the particular condition in accordance with generally accepted professional medical standards. This includes services where approval by the federal or state governmental is required prior to use, but has not yet been granted.

Split Evaluation: Blue Shield of California / Blue Shield of California Life & Health Insurance Company (Blue Shield) policy review can result in a Split Evaluation, where a treatment, procedure or drug will be considered to be investigational for certain indications or conditions, but will be deemed safe and effective for other indications or conditions, and therefore potentially medically necessary in those instances.

Description

Microvolt T-wave alternans (MTWA) testing is a non-invasive, electrocardiographic study of the heart that can be performed in a physician's office with modifications to exercise tolerance stress testing equipment. The test measures beat-to-beat microvolt variations in the shape, amplitude,

or timing of the electrocardiographic T-wave that are linked with the development of clinical ventricular arrhythmias (Bloomfield et al., 2006; Houston, 2006). Microvolt T-wave alternans has been investigated as a potential marker for predicting ventricular events and risk stratification of patients with heart disease who are potentially candidates for a prophylactic implantable cardioverter defibrillator.

Policy

Microvolt T-wave alternans (MWTA) testing is considered **investigational** for all indications including, but not limited to, risk stratification for primary or secondary prevention of fatal arrhythmias and sudden cardiac death (See Policy Guideline).

Policy Guideline

- Primary prevention refers to patients who have *not* experienced a life-threatening arrhythmia
- Secondary prevention refers to patients who have experienced a life-threatening arrhythmia

Patients identified at risk for fatal arrhythmias and sudden cardiac death includes patients with a history of:

- Myocardial infarction
- Congestive heart failure
- Cardiomyopathy
- Other cardiac disorders such as long-QT syndrome (e.g., Brugada syndrome)

Internal Information

There is an MD Determination Form for this Medical Policy. It can be found on the following Web page:
http://myworkpath.com/healthcareservices/MedicalOperations/PSR_Determination_Pages.htm

Documentation Required for Clinical Review
• No records required

The materials provided to you are guidelines used by this plan to authorize, modify, or deny care for persons with similar illness or conditions. Specific care and treatment may vary depending on individual need and the benefits covered under your contract. These Policies are subject to change as new information becomes available.

Click here to view the appendix for this policy

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