

Protocol

Biofeedback as a Treatment of Chronic Pain

(20130)

Medical Benefit		Effective Date: 07/15/07	Next Review Date: 05/15
Preauthorization	No	Review Dates: 02/07, 01/08, 01/09, 01/10, 09/10, 07/11, 07/12, 05/13, 05/14	

*The following Protocol contains medical necessity criteria that apply for this service. It is applicable to Medicare Advantage products unless separate Medicare Advantage criteria are indicated. If the criteria are not met, reimbursement will be denied and the patient cannot be billed. **Preauthorization is not required but is recommended if, despite this Protocol position, you feel this service is medically necessary.** Please note that payment for covered services is subject to eligibility and the limitations noted in the patient's contract at the time the services are rendered.*

Description

Biofeedback is a technique intended to teach patients self-regulation of certain physiologic processes not normally considered to be under voluntary control. Electromyography (EMG) biofeedback has been evaluated as a method to reduce chronic or recurrent pain of musculoskeletal or psychosomatic origin.

Background

Treatment for chronic pain is often multimodal and typically includes psychologic therapy. Psychologic techniques vary but may include cognitive therapy, which teaches subjects the ability to cope with stressful stimuli by attempting to alter negative thought and dysfunctional attitudes, and behavioral approaches to reduce muscle tension and break the pain cycle. Relaxation, using any of a variety of techniques including meditation or mental imagery, is considered a behavioral therapy that may be used alone or as a component of a cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) program. Electromyography (EMG) biofeedback has also been used for the treatment of chronic pain, with the assumption that the ability to reduce muscle tension will be improved through feedback of data to the subject regarding degree of muscle tension. While some consider EMG biofeedback to be a method to obtain relaxation, others consider biofeedback to be distinct from other relaxation procedures.

Biofeedback provides physiologic information not normally available to the patient, with a concerted effort on the part of the patient to use this feedback to help alter the physiologic process in some specific way. Biofeedback training is done either in individual or group sessions, alone, or in combination with other behavioral therapies designed to teach relaxation. A typical program consists of 10 to 20 training sessions of 30 minutes each. Training sessions are performed in a quiet, nonarousing environment. Subjects are instructed to use mental techniques to affect the physiologic variable monitored, and feedback is provided for successful alteration of that physiologic parameter. The feedback may be in the form of lights or tone, verbal praise, or other auditory or visual stimuli.

Related Protocols

Biofeedback as a Treatment of Urinary Incontinence in Adults

Neurofeedback

Biofeedback as a Treatment of Headache

Biofeedback for Miscellaneous Indications

Biofeedback as a Treatment of Fecal Incontinence or Constipation

Policy (Formerly Corporate Medical Guideline)

Biofeedback as a treatment of chronic pain, including but not limited to low back pain, is **investigational**.

Services that are the subject of a clinical trial do not meet our Technology Assessment Protocol criteria and are considered investigational. *For explanation of experimental and investigational, please refer to the Technology Assessment Protocol.*

It is expected that only appropriate and medically necessary services will be rendered. We reserve the right to conduct prepayment and postpayment reviews to assess the medical appropriateness of the above-referenced procedures. **Some of this Protocol may not pertain to the patients you provide care to, as it may relate to products that are not available in your geographic area.**

References

We are not responsible for the continuing viability of web site addresses that may be listed in any references below.

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