



BlueShield
of Northeastern New York

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Protocol

Cryosurgical Ablation of Primary or Metastatic Liver Tumors

(Formerly part of Cryosurgical Ablation)
(70175)

Effective August 16, 2006

Contracts Affected:
All Community Blue HMO
***Senior Blue/Medicare PPO
Traditional Blue

The following protocol contains medical necessity criteria for Cryosurgical Ablation of Primary or Metastatic Liver Tumors services rendered on or after August 16, 2006 for BlueShield of Northeastern New York (BlueShield) contracts. If these criteria are not met, reimbursement will be denied and the patient cannot be billed. Please note that payment for covered services is subject to the limitations noted in the above-referenced contracts and the patient's eligibility at the time the services are rendered.

Description

Hepatic tumors can arise either as primary liver cancer or by metastasis to the liver from other tissues. Local therapy for hepatic metastasis is indicated only when there is no extrahepatic disease, which rarely occurs for patients with primary cancers other than colorectal carcinoma or certain neuroendocrine malignancies. At present, surgical resection with tumor-free margins or liver transplantation represents the only treatments with curative potential. For liver metastases from colorectal cancer, post-surgical adjuvant chemotherapy has been reported to decrease recurrence rates and prolong time to recurrence. However, most hepatic tumors are unresectable at diagnosis, due either to their anatomic location, size, number of lesions, or underlying liver reserve. Combined systemic and hepatic arterial chemotherapy may increase disease-free intervals for patients with hepatic metastases from colorectal cancer, but apparently is not beneficial for those with unresectable hepatocellular carcinoma.

Various locoregional therapies for unresectable liver tumors have been investigated: cryosurgical ablation (cryosurgery), radiofrequency ablation, laser ablation, trans-hepatic artery embolization/chemoembolization, microwave coagulation, and percutaneous ethanol injection. Cryosurgical ablation involves freezing of target tissues, most often by inserting into the tumor a probe through which coolant is circulated. Cryosurgical ablation is typically performed as an open surgical technique but may be performed percutaneously or laparoscopically, all with ultrasound, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), or computed tomography (CT) guidance.

Hyperthermia may be performed in conjunction with the above procedures.

Corporate Medical Guideline

Cryosurgical ablation of either primary or metastatic tumors in the liver is **investigational** because it is unproven outside the investigational setting.

For explanation of experimental and investigational refer to the Technology Assessment Protocol.

*** Senior Blue/Medicare PPO ***

This is a **medically appropriate** service for Senior Blue/Medicare PPO.

BlueShield fully expects that only appropriate and medically necessary services will be rendered. BlueShield reserves the right to conduct prepayment and postpayment reviews to assess the medical appropriateness of the above-referenced procedures.

References

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Last Review Date

Reviewed with literature search/February 2008

Next Review Date

Review with literature search/February 2009