

(20470)

Medical Benefit		Effective Date: 10/01/11	Next Review Date: 07/18
Preauthorization	No	Review Dates: 07/11, 07/12, 07/13, 07/14, 07/15, 07/16, 07/17	

This protocol considers this test or procedure investigational. If the physician feels this service is medically necessary, preauthorization is recommended.

The following protocol contains medical necessity criteria that apply for this service. The criteria are also applicable to services provided in the local Medicare Advantage operating area for those members, unless separate Medicare Advantage criteria are indicated. If the criteria are not met, reimbursement will be denied and the patient cannot be billed. 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

Lipoprotein(a) (LPA) is a lipid-rich particle similar to low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and has been determined to be an independent risk factor for coronary artery disease (CAD). Patients with a positive test for the *LPA* genetic variant, rs3798220, have a higher risk for thrombosis and therefore may derive greater benefit from the anti-thrombotic properties of aspirin. As a result, testing for the rs3798220 variant has been proposed as a method of stratifying benefit from aspirin treatment.

Summary of Evidence

The *lipoprotein(a)* (*LPA*) minor allele, rs3798220, is associated with higher levels of LPA and a higher risk for cardiovascular events. This allele is infrequent in the population and is associated with a modest increase in cardiovascular risk in the general population. Testing for this allele is commercially available, but performance characteristics are uncertain and standardization of testing has not been demonstrated. Several observational studies have reported that this genetic variant is an independent risk factor for cardiovascular disease, but some studies have not reported a significant association.

Evidence from a post hoc analysis of the Women's Health Study reported that carriers of the allele may derive greater benefit from aspirin treatment compared with noncarriers. It is unclear whether this information derived from genetic testing leads to changes in management. In particular, it cannot be determined from available evidence whether deviating from current guidelines on aspirin treatment based on *LPA* genetic testing improves outcomes. Therefore, measurement of the *LPA* rs3798220 variant as a decision aid for aspirin treatment is considered investigational.

Policy

The use of genetic testing for the *LPA* rs3798220 allele (*LPA*-Aspirin Genotype) is considered **investigational** in patients who are being considered for treatment with aspirin to reduce risk of cardiovascular events.

Background

Much epidemiologic evidence has determined that LPA blood level is an independent risk factor for CVD. The overall risk associated with LPA appears to be modest, and the degree of risk may be mediated by other factors such as LDL levels and/or hormonal status.

LPA levels are relatively stable in people over time but vary up to 1000-fold between people, presumably on a genetic basis. A single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) in the *LPA* gene, *LPA* rs3798220, has been associated with both elevated LPA levels and an increased risk of CVD. This polymorphism substitutes methionine for isoleucine at amino acid position 4399 and is also called I4399M. Mendelian randomization studies have supported the hypothesis that this genetic variant, and the subsequent increase in LPA levels, are causative of CVD.

Aspirin is a well-established treatment for patients with known CAD. It also is prescribed as primary prevention for some patients who are at increased risk of CAD. Current recommendations for primary prevention consider the future risk of cardiovascular events weighed against the bleeding risk of aspirin. U.S. Preventive Services Task Force guidelines from 2009 recommend aspirin for men between the ages of 45 and 79 years when the benefit in reducing myocardial infarction (MI) exceeds the risk of bleeding, particularly gastrointestinal hemorrhage; and for women between the ages of 55 and 79 years when the benefit in reducing stroke exceeds the risk of gastrointestinal bleeding. Given guidelines such as these that recommend individualizing the risk/benefit ratio of aspirin therapy, additional tools that would aid in better defining the benefits of aspirin, and/or the risk of bleeding, have potential utility for clinicians who are making decisions about aspirin therapy.

LPA-Aspirin Genotype is a commercially available genetic test (Berkeley HeartLab, a Quest Diagnostics service) that detects the presence of the rs3798220 allele. Patients with a positive test for rs3798220 have a higher risk for thrombosis and therefore may derive more benefit from the antithrombotic properties of aspirin. It has been proposed that the additional information obtained from the *LPA*-Aspirin Check® test may aid physicians in better estimating the benefit/risk of aspirin therapy and therefore may aid in deciding whether to prescribe aspirin for individual patients.

Regulatory Status

The *LPA*-Aspirin Genotype test has not been cleared or approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Thus, genotyping is offered as a laboratory-developed test. Clinical laboratories may develop and validate tests in-house (“home-brew”) and market them as a laboratory service; such tests must meet general regulatory standards of the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA). The laboratory offering the service must be licensed by CLIA for high-complexity testing. Berkeley HeartLab/Quest Diagnostics is a CLIA-certified laboratory.

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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