Macula Risk

Procedures addressed

The inclusion of any procedure code in this table does not imply that the code is under management or requires prior authorization. Refer to the specific Health Plan's procedure code list for management requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures addressed by this guideline</th>
<th>Procedure code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macula Risk</td>
<td>81479</td>
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</table>

What is age related macular degeneration

Definition

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness and irreversible vision loss among older adults (>65 years).

The etiology of AMD is believed to be multifactorial, and includes modifiable and non-modifiable genetic risk factors that affect the progression of AMD to more advanced stages. The Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS) evaluated the effects of supplements with antioxidants (vitamin E, C, and beta-carotene) and zinc. Results showed that patients taking these supplements experienced a 25% reduced risk of disease progression to advanced AMD in at least one eye over a period of 5 years. More recent data from the AREDS2 study found that omega-3 acids or lutein and zeaxanthin added to the original AREDS formulation had no additional treatment effect on AMD progression to advanced disease. However, some clinical study results of genetic subgroup analyses have shown a differential treatment effect of supplementation on progression based on genotype. For example, some results suggest that complement factor H gene (CFH) and age-related maculopathy susceptibility 2 gene (ARMS2) genetic polymorphisms have different effects on the progression risk of AMD in different treatment groups of AREDS, while other studies fail to report any differential effect. As a result, there is ongoing controversy regarding the impact of nutritional supplementation on disease progression to advanced AMP for those patients with specific genotypes.
Test information

Introduction

According to the manufacturer (ArcticDx, Inc.), Macula Risk PGx AMD testing is intended to assist in the selection of eye supplement formulations for patients diagnosed with intermediate dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

The Macula Risk PGx is a combined pharmacogenetic and prognostic DNA test that assesses a patient’s risk of progression to advanced AMD based on their individual risk profile and is designed to aid in the selection of eye supplement formulations. 

Guidelines and evidence

Introduction

The following section includes relevant guidelines and evidence pertaining to Macula Risk testing.

Guidelines

There are no U.S. national guidelines that address the use of Macula Risk.

Literature review

Several retrospective post-hoc subgroup analyses have evaluated the clinical usefulness of identifying specific genotypes to guide optimal nutritional supplementation among patients with ARMD.1-3,5-9

Most, if not all, available studies are association studies conducting retrospective post-hoc analyses of the same population sample of the previous RCT evaluating the efficacy of the AREDS formulation on AMD progression. These studies conducted several repeat analysis using differing methodologies of various subsets of the patient population enrolled in the AREDS Study. Results of these studies are conflicting and inconsistent. One study that conducted a re-analysis of the AREDS data failed to detect an association between genetics and nutritional supplements in AMD prophylaxis.8 Another study showed a treatment benefit of zinc to reduce progression to advanced AMD among patients without risk alleles for CFH and 1 or 2 risk alleles for ARMS2.5 Another analysis by the same author found that among patients treated with zinc, the risk increased for those with a CFH allele, while the risk lessened for patients with ARMS2 allele.2

More recently, three studies have found that CFH and ARMS gene variants either do or do not influence progression of disease to advanced AMD, further demonstrating inconsistent study results.3,7,8 Thus, there is considerable uncertainty regarding the clinical usefulness of genotyping to guide use of nutritional supplements.
There is also a lack of direct evidence regarding the clinical utility of genetic testing for AMD progression. Well-designed research that consistently replicates findings of significant associations between genotype and disease progression following AREDS supplementation is needed before the patient-specific genotype testing is used to guide decisions regarding nutritional supplementation in clinical practice.

Criteria

Introduction

Requests for Macula Risk are reviewed using the following criteria. This test is considered investigational and/or experimental.

- Investigational and experimental (I&E) molecular and genomic (MolGen) tests refer to assays involving chromosomes, DNA, RNA, or gene products that have insufficient data to determine the net health impact, which typically means there is insufficient data to support that a test accurately assesses the outcome of interest (analytical and clinical validity), significantly improves health outcomes (clinical utility), and/or performs better than an existing standard of care medical management option. Such tests are also not generally accepted as standard of care in the evaluation or management of a particular condition.

- In the case of MolGen testing, FDA clearance is not a reliable standard given the number of laboratory developed tests that currently fall outside of FDA oversight and FDA clearance often does not assess clinical utility.

References

Introduction

This guideline cites the following references.


