



MASSACHUSETTS

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Medical Policy

Sensory Integration Therapy and Auditory Integration Therapy

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Policy Number: 659

BCBSA Reference Number: 8.03.13 (For Plan internal use only)

Related Policies

Cognitive Rehabilitation, #[660](#)

Policy

Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, and Indemnity

Sensory integration therapy and auditory integration therapy are considered [INVESTIGATIONAL](#).

Prior Authorization Information

Inpatient

- For services described in this policy, precertification/preauthorization **IS REQUIRED** for all products if the procedure is performed **inpatient**.

Outpatient

- For services described in this policy, see below for products where prior authorization **might be required** if the procedure is performed **outpatient**.

| | Outpatient |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Commercial Managed Care (HMO and POS) | This is not a covered service. |
| Commercial PPO and Indemnity | This is not a covered service. |

CPT Codes / HCPCS Codes / ICD Codes

Inclusion or exclusion of a code does not constitute or imply member coverage or provider reimbursement. Please refer to the member's contract benefits in effect at the time of service to determine coverage or non-coverage as it applies to an individual member.

Providers should report all services using the most up-to-date industry-standard procedure, revenue, and diagnosis codes, including modifiers where applicable.

The following codes are included below for informational purposes only; this is not an all-inclusive list.

The following CPT code is considered investigational for Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, and Indemnity:

CPT Codes

| CPT codes: | Code Description |
|------------|--|
| 97533 | Sensory integrative techniques to enhance sensory processing and promote adaptive responses to environmental demands, direct (one-on-one) patient contact by the provider, each 15 minutes |

Description

The goal of sensory integration therapy is to improve how the brain processes and adapts to sensory information, as opposed to teaching specific skills. Therapy usually involves activities that provide vestibular, proprioceptive, and tactile stimuli, which are selected to match specific sensory processing deficits of the child. For example, swings are commonly used to incorporate vestibular input, while trapeze bars and large foam pillows or mats may be used to stimulate somatosensory pathways of proprioception and deep touch. Tactile reception may be addressed through a variety of activities and surface textures involving light touch.

Auditory integration therapy (also known as auditory integration training, auditory enhancement training, audio-psycho-phonology) involves having individuals listen to music modified to remove frequencies to which they are hypersensitive, with the goal of gradually increasing exposure to sensitive frequencies. Although several methods of auditory integration therapy have been developed, the most widely described is the Berard method, which involves 2 half-hour sessions per day separated by at least 3 hours, over 10 consecutive days, during which patients listen to recordings. Auditory integration therapy has been proposed for individuals with a range of developmental and behavioral disorders, including learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, pervasive developmental disorder, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Other methods include the Tomatis method, which involves listening to electronically modified music and speech, and Samonas Sound Therapy, which involves listening to filtered music, voices, and nature sounds.¹

Summary

Sensory integration therapy has been proposed as a treatment of developmental disorders in patients with established dysfunction of sensory processing, particularly autism spectrum disorder. Sensory integration therapy may be offered by occupational and physical therapists who are certified in sensory integration therapy. Auditory integration therapy uses gradual exposure to certain types of sounds to improve communication in a variety of developmental disorders, particularly autism.

Summary of Evidence

For individuals who have developmental disorders who receive sensory integration therapy, the evidence includes systematic reviews of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and case series. Relevant outcomes are functional outcomes and quality of life. Due to the individualized approach to sensory integration therapy and the large variations in patients' disorders, large multicenter RCTs are needed to evaluate the efficacy of this intervention. The most direct evidence on sensory integration therapy outcomes derives from several RCTs. Although some of these trials demonstrated improvements for subsets of outcomes measured, they had small sample sizes, heterogeneous patient populations, and variable outcome measures. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

For individuals who have developmental disorders who receive auditory integration therapy, the evidence includes systematic reviews of RCTs. Relevant outcomes are functional outcomes and quality of life. For auditory integration therapy, the largest body of literature relates to its use in autism spectrum disorder. Several systematic reviews of auditory integration therapy in the treatment of autism have found limited evidence to support its use. No comparative studies identified evaluated use of auditory integration

therapy for other conditions. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

Policy History

| Date | Action |
|----------------|---|
| 4/2022 | Annual policy review. Description, summary, and references updated. Policy statements unchanged. |
| 4/2021 | Annual policy review. Description, summary, and references updated. Policy statements unchanged. |
| 1/2021 | Medicare information removed. See MP #132 Medicare Advantage Management for local coverage determination and national coverage determination reference. |
| 5/2020 | Annual policy review. Description, summary, and references updated. Policy statements unchanged. |
| 4/2019 | Annual policy review. Description, summary, and references updated. Policy statements unchanged. |
| 4/2016 | Annual policy review. New references added. |
| 4/2015 | Annual policy review. Policy statement expanded to include investigational statement for auditory integration therapy. Title changed to reflect inclusion of auditory integration therapy. Effective 4/1/2015 |
| 11/2011-4/2012 | Medical policy ICD 10 remediation: Formatting, editing and coding updates. No changes to policy statements. |
| 1/2012 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Neurology and Neurosurgery. No changes to policy statements. |
| 5/2011 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Pediatrics and Endocrinology. No changes to policy statements. |
| 2/2011 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Psychiatry and Ophthalmology. No changes to policy statements. |
| 1/2011 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Neurology and Neurosurgery. No changes to policy statements. |
| 5/2010 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Pediatrics and Endocrinology. No changes to policy statements. |
| 2/2010 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Psychiatry and Ophthalmology. No changes to policy statements. |
| 1/2010 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Neurology and Neurosurgery. No changes to policy statements. |
| 1/2010 | Annual policy review. No changes to policy statements. |
| 5/2009 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Pediatrics and Endocrinology. No changes to policy statements. |
| 2/2009 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Psychiatry and Ophthalmology. No changes to policy statements. |
| 1/2009 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Neurology and Neurosurgery. No changes to policy statements. |
| 5/2008 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Pediatrics and Endocrinology. No changes to policy statements. |
| 5/2008 | Annual policy review. No changes to policy statements. |
| 2/2008 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Psychiatry and Ophthalmology. No changes to policy statements. |
| 1/2008 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Neurology and Neurosurgery. No changes to policy statements. |
| 6/2007 | Annual policy review. No changes to policy statements. |
| 5/2007 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Pediatrics and Endocrinology. No changes to policy statements. |
| 4/2007 | Annual policy review. No changes to policy statements. |

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|--------|--|
| 2/2007 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Psychiatry and Ophthalmology. No changes to policy statements. |
| 1/2007 | Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Neurology and Neurosurgery. No changes to policy statements. |

Information Pertaining to All Blue Cross Blue Shield Medical Policies

Click on any of the following terms to access the relevant information:

[Medical Policy Terms of Use](#)

[Managed Care Guidelines](#)

[Indemnity/PPO Guidelines](#)

[Clinical Exception Process](#)

[Medical Technology Assessment Guidelines](#)

References

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