



Coding CORNERSM



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Welcome to the January issue of Maxim Coding CornerSM! As a leader in the HIM industry, [Maxim Health Information Services](#) is committed to providing you with updates on coding-related topics that matter to you. This month, we are focusing on the differences between coding for intermediate and comprehensive ophthalmological services. Read on below to learn more.

Ophthalmological Services: Intermediate vs. Comprehensive

Intermediate and comprehensive ophthalmological services consist of integrated services in which medical decision-making cannot be separated from the examining techniques used. The level of service includes several basic routine examination techniques, which include; slit lamp examination, keratometry, ophthalmoscopy, retinoscopy, tonometry, and basic sensorimotor examination.

Intermediate codes (92002 or 92012) describe an evaluation of a new or existing condition complicated with a new diagnostic or management problem. This problem does not necessarily relate to the primary diagnosis. Elements of this service include history, general medical observation, external ocular, adnexal examination, and other diagnostic procedures as indicated, which may include the use of mydriasis for ophthalmoscopy.

Intermediate Coding Example:

A glaucoma patient returns for a three month follow-up exam with a pressure change requiring consideration of treatment options to include discussion of risk factors and lifestyle modification (ex: smoking cessation).

Comprehensive codes (92004 or 92014) describe a general evaluation of the complete visual system. The service includes history, general medical observation, external and ophthalmoscopic examinations, gross visual fields, and basic sensorimotor examination. At times, this exam will include biomicroscopy, cycloplegia or mydriasis, and/or tonometry. It always includes initiation of diagnostic and treatment programs.

Comprehensive Coding Example:

The initiation of a diagnostic and treatment program includes the prescription of medication, and arranging for special ophthalmological, diagnostic, or treatment services, consultations, laboratory procedures, and radiological services.

Elements of Ophthalmologic Examination

The physical examination elements of an ophthalmologic examination include:

- visual acuity
- visual fields
- eyelids and adnexa
- ocular mobility
- pupils
- iris
- cornea
- anterior chamber
- lens
- intraocular pressure
- retina (vitreous, macula, periphery, and vessels)
- optic disc
- mental status

A comprehensive examination consists of nine or more elements and always includes fundus examination – fundus examination does not have to be dilated if dilation is not indicated.

An intermediate examination consists of eight or fewer of the specified elements.

REMEMBER: Services that require minimal optometric/ophthalmologic examination techniques are included in the evaluation and management codes (99201 – 99799).

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