Vitreous Floater Solutions
Consultation & Research Group Inc

LETTER OF MEDICAL NECESSITY
Nd:YAG Laser Ablation of Degenerative Vitreous Conditions

Dear Sir or Ma'am,

I am writing on behalf of your member who is seeking preauthorization or reimbursement payment for treatment of the degenerative vitreous bodies that had formed in their eyes. I am one of just a few doctors in the country who has developed the skills and have the experience to treat these visually significant vitreous floaters with a laser. In fact, my practice is dedicated to the non-invasive treatment more technically known as Nd:YAG Laser Photodisruptive Vitreolysis.

I don't treat the small unobtrusive floaters that most people are familiar with. Usually the patients that seek me out suffer large and distracting clumps of collapsed collagen that appear as lines, clouds, and dense shadows that move about in their vision. Occasionally these will actually occlude their central vision presenting itself as a safety issue as well.

Traditionally, eye doctors have presented just two options: 1) "Do nothing and learn to live with it", or 2) a surgical vitrectomy requiring outpatient surgery. The vitrectomy surgery involves going into the eye and completely remove the vitreous gel and replace it with a saline solution. This procedure has well-known risks including retinal detachment and a very high incidence of cataractogenesis. The alternative, office-based YAG laser procedure offers the chance to significantly reduce the presence and appearance of the floaters with little-to-no down-time and fast visual recovery. This arguable low-risk procedure fills the wide chasm between the two traditional options. The YAG laser procedure by necessity usually requires multiple treatments and so the usual global periods applicable to more common single treatment procedures does not apply.

We can likely agree that benign vitreous floaters are benign only in that they are not a health risk to the eye itself and not a degenerative condition of the cornea, lens, or the retina. This treatment is not so much to treat a threat to the health of the eye as it is improving the "quality" of vision as well as the "quality of life" for these patients. For patients who drive, read, pilots, use computer monitors, or are active in sports, these floaters can very negatively affect the quality of their life. I have seen patient depressed, despondent, and nearly suicidal over the thought of having to endure these floaters for another 20-40 years.

Similar to cataracts, these patients have no glasses or contact lenses that can alleviate their symptoms. Cataracts, though, are stable from moment to moment, whereas the shadows caused by floaters are dynamic and more difficult to ignore. My patients seek treatment not out of vanity or for convenience, but instead look for relief for a pathological condition that affects their sight. We ask that you treat this request with the above considerations or as you would for other media opacity disorders that affect vision such as cataracts.

For reference, the codes commonly used are the following:

99204-57	Evaluation/Consultation
379.24	ICD-9 code for vitreous floaters and degenerative vitreous conditions
67031-58	CPT code for Laser Treatment of Vitreous Strands, planned staged procedure
67299-58	Unlisted Procedure, Posterior Segment (Laser Ablation of Vitreous Degenerative Condition)

I have much more information about the procedure available at our website: www.VitreousFloaterSolutions.com. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any more information regarding this matter and request.

Best Regards

James H. Johnson, M.D.
Medical Director
Vitreous Floater Solutions Consulting & Research Group Inc

REFERENCES:

Nd:YAG Vitreolysis and Pars Plana Vitrectomy: Surgical Treatment for Vitreous Floaters
YM Delaney, A Oyinloye, and L Benjamin, Eye (2002) 16, 21-26

Treatment of Vitreous Floaters with Neodymium YAG Laser
W Tsai, Y Chen, C Su, British Journal of Ophthalmology 1993;77:485-488

Laser Treatment Discussion Forum
http://vitreousfloatersolutions.com/forum/forum.php?id=2