

## Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

### You Be the Coder: FBR Follow-Up With Slit Lamp

**Question:** One of our optometrist uses a slit-lamp to check on healing after a foreign-body removal during follow-up visits. He wants to try to charge extra for using the slit-lamp, arguing that it takes additional time and expertise to do this. Granted, he used it the first time for the FB removal, but it seems a bit much to try to charge extra each time. How should we code and bill these types of visits?

North Dakota Subscriber

**Answer:** There is no code that describes only a slit-lamp exam without a removal of a foreign body. If the optometrist performs the exam as part of a follow-up encounter to evaluate the patient's condition, only a low-level E/M code (99212) would be correct.

Link 99212 to the original complaint  for example, 918.1 (Superficial injury of the eye and adnexa; cornea).

If the patient presented with pain or other symptoms that necessitated more care management, a third-level E/M code (99213) might be appropriate. But if the optometrist examines the eye  even with the slit lamp  and finds nothing, there's no diagnosis, and therefore nothing to code or bill for.