

Case Number:	CM13-0002249		
Date Assigned:	11/20/2013	Date of Injury:	10/19/2010
Decision Date:	03/07/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/11/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/22/2013

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to a physician reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The physician reviewer is Board Certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and is licensed to practice in California. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The physician reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This patient is a 40-year old gentleman with a history of inguinal hernia caused from a lifting incident at work. He had immediate symptoms, including a large mass in the scrotum. For undisclosed reasons, the patient did not have the hernia repair until one month following the date of injury. His post-op course was complicated by pain issues at the right groin and testicle. Revision hernia repair and exploration was done in January of 2012, and on exploration, the doctor found significant scar tissue encasing the ilioinguinal and genitofemoral nerve. Diagnostic injections to those nerves confirmed that they were causing neuropathic pain. The patient failed conservative measures of treatment, including medications, and therapy. Given the neuropathic component of pain, psych clearance for a SCS trial was recommended. This was reviewed in Utilization Review on 2/12/13, and on that review, psych clearance was recommended for certification. However, a subsequent review by the same UR physician yielded a different opinion on 7/11/13. Because guidelines do not list inguinal/hernia pain as an indication for SCS, the trial was denied, and because the trial was denied, psyche clearance was then denied. Letter from the patient's attorney on 12/10/13 reports that the patient did see a psychologist on 2/27/13 for psyche clearance, and the patient was cleared from a psychological standpoint for a SCS trial.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

Psych clearance: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Psychological evaluations, IDDS & SCS Page(s): 101.

Decision rationale: Please note my #2 decision with regards to the SCS trial. Because I do state that the SCS trial is medically necessary, psych clearance, per guidelines is required prior to doing the trial. In this case, the patient received certification for the request for psych clearance on 2/12/13 in Utilization Review, and subsequent letter from the patient's attorney states that the evaluation was done by a psychologist on 2/27/13. Psych clearance was given. Submitted reports do not contain any clinical details that would suggest any change in psych/mental state that would necessitate repeating the evaluation, therefore, medical necessity is not established for repeat psych clearance.

Spinal Cord Stimulator (SCS) trial: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG)-TWC Pain Procedure Summary, updated 6/7/2013.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Spinal cord stimulators (SCS), Page(s): 101-107.

Decision rationale: This request was for a SCS trial, and guidelines support this for Failed Back syndrome, CRPS, post amputation pain/phantom limb pain, post herpetic neuralgia, spinal cord injury dysesthesias, multiple sclerosis related pain, and peripheral vascular disease, where insufficient blood flow to the lower extremity causes pain. A prior denial was based on guidelines not supporting SCS for hernia/groin pain. This does not take into account two things. First, there is a significant neuropathic component of pain that is well documented. Second, there is also suggestion that some of the pain may have been ischemic. Both of those causes of pain may be amenable to SCS treatment. This patient has failed extensive conservative care, including medications, therapy and injection. He is having side effects from medications, and the pain has significantly affected his life. A trial does not suggest that an implant will be done, but certainly, if there is a clinically significant effect from the trial, this may be a significant intervention for this patient. This patient does meet guideline criteria for a standpoint of intractable neuropathic pain, and possible ischemic pain that has failed conservative and surgical care. Medical necessity is established.

Psych referral for medication management: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 15 Stress Related Conditions Page(s): 398.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Psychological Treatment Page(s): 101-102.

Decision rationale: While a psychologist is guideline supported for psychological intervention with regards to chronic pain management and psychological issues, psychologists do not prescribe or manage prescription medications. This is the role of a physician. The patient is currently being followed by multiple physicians, including a pain specialist. They are more than qualified to manage chronic pain medications. A referral to "psych" for medication management is not medically necessary