

Case Number:	CM13-0013726		
Date Assigned:	12/18/2013	Date of Injury:	09/26/2011
Decision Date:	02/20/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/14/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/19/2013

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 & Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Pain Medicine and is licensed to practice in Oklahoma and Texas. 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:

The patient is a 53 year old male who reported an injury on 09/26/2011. The mechanism of injury was stated to be a lifting injury. The patient was known to have undergone a fusion surgery at L4-5 in 2012. The patient was noted to have a psychological evaluation on 11/30/2012, which revealed the patient was not cleared to receive a spinal cord stimulator (SCS) because he did not want to receive an implant. The patient was noted, per the documentation of 08/03/2013, to have low back pain radiating down the left leg. The patient was noted to report intermittent numbness and weakness in both feet and the patient was noted to be inquiring about an SCS trial. The patient's medications were noted to include Nucynta ER and oxycodone hydrochloride. The patient's diagnoses were noted to include lumbar radiculopathy, lumbar disc displacement without myelopathy, lumbar spinal stenosis, and post-laminectomy syndrome in the lumbar region. The request was made for an SCS trial.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Spinal cord stimulator trail with medical 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 (intrathecal drug delivery systems & spinal cord, Spinal co. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Society of General Internal Medicine <http://www.choosingwisely.org/?s=preoperative+surgical+clearance&submit=>

Decision rationale: The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) guidelines indicate that a spinal cord stimulator trial is recommended for patients in cases when less invasive procedures have failed or are contraindicated and who have failed back syndrome. Additionally, the California MTUS Guidelines indicate that a patient needs to have a psychological evaluation prior to a spinal cord stimulator trial. The clinical documentation submitted for review indicated the patient had a psychological evaluation on 11/30/2012, which revealed the patient was not cleared to receive a spinal cord stimulator. The request for the spinal cord stimulator trial would not be supported. Per the Society of General Internal Medicine Online, "Preoperative assessment is expected before all surgical procedures." The clinical documentation submitted for review failed to support the request for a spinal cord stimulator trial as there was no recent psychological evaluation clearing the patient for the trial. As the spinal cord stimulator trial was not medically necessary, the request for medical clearance is not medically necessary. Given the above, the request for a Spinal cord stimulator trail with medical clearance is not medically necessary.