

Case Number:	CM13-0013769		
Date Assigned:	10/01/2013	Date of Injury:	11/21/2002
Decision Date:	01/17/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/12/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/20/2013

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:

According to the 8/12/13 UR letter, the patient is a 56 year-old, female with a lumbar spine injury. She had lumbar fusion followed by hardware removal and continues with back pain and bilateral lower extremity paresthesia. The 7/9/13 PR2 from [REDACTED] states the patient just got out of the hospital due to congestive heart failure, and was unable to attend 2 authorized aquatic therapy sessions. The SLR at 90 degrees was reported to be positive with symptoms to the back of the knee and there was tenderness at L4/5. The 8/6/13, PR2 states the patient was in to go over the MRI findings. She was reported to have sharp pain to the lumbar spine and difficulty walking. The 9/6/13, PR2 states that the patient is reported to have fallen at work that day and had a Toradol injection. Left SLR was positive at 80 degrees and there may be some sensory findings in both legs, but handwriting is not legible, and she does not appear to mention any dermatomal distribution. The plan was to appeal the pain management consult and ESI. There is a 8/1/13 lumbar contrast MRI report with comparison to the 7/26/13 study, which was read as stable with no focus of abnormal enhancement. The L3/4 area is noted to have 2-mm disc protrusion with facet degeneration and ligamentum hypertrophy causing mild bilateral foraminal narrowing and mild to moderate central stenosis. There was 5-mm anterolisthesis of L4 on L5 suspected of being from degenerative facet disease, but the evaluation for spondylolysis was limited. There was mild bilateral foraminal narrowing at L4/5. L5/S1 had mild right and moderate left foraminal narrowing. The 12/18/12 EMG/NCS of the upper and lower extremities by [REDACTED] shows chronic left S1 radiculopathy and severe axonal polyneuropathy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Pain Management consultation: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ACOEM Chapter 7

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ACOEM Practice Guidelines, 2nd Edition (2004), Chapter 7, pg 127

Decision rationale: The orthopedic surgeon has requested a consult with a pain management physician to assist in patient care. ACOEM states a consultation can be made "when the plan or course of care may benefit from additional expertise." The request appears in accordance with ACOEM guidelines.

Lumbar epidural steroid injection (LESI) at L3-L4: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural steroid injections (ESIs).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural steroid injections (ESIs) Page(s): 46.

Decision rationale: