MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM13-0018715		
Date Assigned:	11/06/2013	Date of Injury:	01/20/2013
Decision Date:	01/23/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/27/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/30/2013

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 Plastic Surgery, has a subspecialty in Hand Surgery and is licensed to practice in Oregon. 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 is a 28-year-old male who had his left hand caught between a chain and a sprocket on an industrial machine at work on 1/20/13. He was treated with digital amputations, ORIF of distal radius fracture and complex repair and debridement. Skin grafting was required as well. He had an extended period of time off work due to slow healing of his fingertip amputations. Finger prostheses are now recommended.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Request for pilot finger prosthesis, index finger and middle finger: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Prostheses and Pererira BP, et al. Benefits and use of digital prostheses. J Hand Surg (Am) 1996 Mar;21(2):222-8 and Doppen P, Solomons M, Kritzinger SJ. Osseointegrated finger prostheses. Hand Surg Eur Vol. 2009 Feb;34(1):29-34.

Decision rationale: The requested digital prostheses are more beneficial than any other available treatment for this patient. The patient is motivated, the prosthesis will replace a missing part and

the prosthesis will improve function. A study by Pereira and colleagues on the benefits and uses of digital prostheses concluded that, "our study confirmed that digital prostheses, if of high quality, can alone or in conjunction with appropriate surgical reconstructions restore near normal appearance and form, substantially repair damaged body image, and simultaneously improve physical capability." A study by Doppenn et al on osseointegrated finger implants found excellent functional and cosmetic improvement in three of four patients with single digit amputations. A study of single finger amputations treated with a digital prosthesis by Pilley and Quinton found improved keyboarding function and grasp in the patients who sought prosthesis fitting for functional indications. Beasley and deBeze found that digital prostheses improve striking activities such as keyboarding. Finally, a study by Lifchez and colleagues concluded as follows: "Our results show a significant improvement in 3-finger-pinch strength and grip strength and a trend of improvement of tip-pinch, lateral-pinch, and grip strength in dynamometer positions 1, 2, 3, and 4 in these patients when tested with and without their prostheses. Function in activities of daily living, as assessed by the Disabilities of the Arm, Shoulder, and Hand questionnaire, was improved globally with prosthesis use. In addition, significant improvement was noted in several specific activities including opening a jar, writing, and turning a key, among others. These results show that prosthesis use provides a functional benefit to these patients in multiple activities." It is clear from these five studies that digital prostheses improve hand function. The most beneficial treatment for this patient is issuance of digital prostheses.