

Case Number:	CM13-0022211		
Date Assigned:	03/12/2014	Date of Injury:	11/05/1992
Decision Date:	04/30/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/28/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/10/2013

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Occupational Medicine, 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 expert 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 records made available for review, this is a 51-year-old female with a 11/5/92 date of injury. At the time (6/24/13) of the request for authorization for selective nerve root block right L1-L2, there is documentation of subjective (low back pain, right hip pain, right groin pain, and pain radiating down both legs) and objective (gait favors her right leg, tenderness over the greater trochanter and sacroiliac (SI) joint on the right side, and positive Faber's test is positive on the right) findings, current diagnoses (rule out L1-2 radiculopathy), and treatment to date (medications, spinal cord stimulator, and therapy). There is no documentation of objective (sensory changes, motor changes, or reflex changes) radicular findings in the requested nerve root distribution and imaging (MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), CT (computed tomography), myelography, or CT myelography & x-ray) findings (nerve root compression OR moderate or greater central canal stenosis, lateral recess stenosis, or neural foraminal stenosis) at the requested level.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

SELECTIVE NERVE ROOT BLOCK RIGHT L1-L2: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 46.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG); Low Back, Epidural Steroid Injections (ESIs).

Decision rationale: MTUS reference to ACOEM Guidelines identifies documentations of objective radiculopathy in an effort to avoid surgery as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of epidural steroid injections. The Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) identifies documentation of subjective (pain, numbness, or tingling in a correlating nerve root distribution) and objective (sensory changes, motor changes, or reflex changes (if reflex relevant to the associated level) in a correlating nerve root distribution) radicular findings in each of the requested nerve root distributions, imaging (MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), CT (computed tomography), myelography, or CT myelography & x-ray) findings (nerve root compression OR moderate or greater central canal stenosis, lateral recess stenosis, or neural foraminal stenosis) at each of the requested levels, failure of conservative treatment (activity modification, medications, and physical modalities), and no more than two nerve root levels injected one session; as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of lumbar transforaminal epidural steroid injection using fluoroscopy. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of rule out L1-2 radiculopathy. In addition, there is documentation of subjective (pain) radicular findings in the requested nerve root distribution, and failure of conservative treatment (activity modification, medications, and physical modalities). However, there is no documentation of objective (sensory changes, motor changes, or reflex changes) radicular findings in the requested nerve root distribution and imaging (MRI, CT, myelography, or CT myelography & x-ray) findings (nerve root compression OR moderate or greater central canal stenosis, lateral recess stenosis, or neural foraminal stenosis) at the requested level. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for selective nerve root block right L1-L2 is not medically necessary.