

Case Number:	CM13-0023626		
Date Assigned:	12/11/2013	Date of Injury:	04/18/2008
Decision Date:	01/29/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/12/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/12/2013

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 Emergency Medicine, and is licensed to practice in New York. 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 73-year-old male with complaints of continuing back pain. Diagnosis was degenerative disc disease of the lumbar spine and lumbar spinal stenosis. The date of injury was April 12, 2008. The patient was treated with medications, physical therapy, home exercise, and TENS unit. On October 28, 2013, a request for a H wave stimulator unit fir use at home was submitted.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

H-wave home unit: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines H-Wave stimulation (HWT)..

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): s 117-118.

Decision rationale: H-wave stimulation (HWT) is not recommended as an isolated intervention, but a one-month home-based trial of H- Wave stimulation may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option for diabetic neuropathic pain, or chronic soft tissue inflammation if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, and only following failure of initially recommended conservative care, including recommended physical therapy (i.e.,

exercise) and medications, plus transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS). There is no evidence that H-Wave is more effective as an initial treatment when compared to TENS for analgesic effects. A randomized controlled trial comparing analgesic effects of H-wave therapy and TENS on pain threshold found that there were no differences between the different modalities or HWT frequencies. The one-month HWT trial may be appropriate to permit the physician and provider licensed to provide physical therapy to study the effects and benefits, and it should be documented (as an adjunct to ongoing treatment modalities within a functional restoration approach) as to how often the unit was used, as well as outcomes in terms of pain relief and function. Trial periods of more than one month should be justified by documentation submitted for review. While H-Wave and other similar type devices can be useful for pain management, they are most successfully used as a tool in combination with functional improvement. In this case the patient had received physical therapy and had used a TENS unit. There was documentation that the patient was able to more active while using the HWT, but there was no documentation of the number of times used. The pain relief and functional improvement was not clearly defined and cannot be recommended.