

Case Number:	CM13-0034448		
Date Assigned:	12/06/2013	Date of Injury:	08/28/2011
Decision Date:	02/10/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/26/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/15/2013

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 Orthopedic Surgery 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:

The patient is a 63-year-old gentleman who was injured on 08/28/11 sustaining a right knee injury secondary to repetitive motion. Records indicate a 08/08/13 assessment with [REDACTED] indicating the claimant's right knee is with a diagnosis of advanced degenerative joint disease with imaging for review including radiographs showing moderate degenerative changes to the right knee. Physical examination findings at that date showed restricted range of motion from 0 to 100 degrees with normal patellar tracking, positive crepitation, and joint line tenderness bilaterally. A follow up of 09/05/13 with [REDACTED] indicated ongoing complaints of pain despite conservative care with a finding of a knee joint effusion and tenderness. Further imaging has not been documented. Treatment to date has included prior corticosteroid injections, medication management, bracing, and activity restrictions. Based on the diagnosis of degenerative joint disease, a surgical arthroscopy with 12 sessions of postoperative therapy and an interferential unit were recommended.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Right Knee Arthroscopy: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines Treatment in Worker's Comp, 18th Edition, 2013 Updates: knee procedure.

Decision rationale: California ACOEM and MTUS Guidelines are silent regarding specific clinical criteria for surgery for a diagnosis of degenerative joint disease. When looking at Official Disability Guidelines criteria, surgery for degenerative joint disease yields unsatisfactory outcomes with benefit no more beneficial than home exercises or physical therapy treatment alone. The clinical guidelines in this case would not support the acute need for a right knee arthroscopy based on the claimant's current clinical picture.

Physiotherapy 12 sessions (post-op); right knee: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Based on California MTUS Postoperative Rehabilitative Guidelines, the postoperative therapy in this case would not be indicated as the need for operative intervention has not been established.

Interferential Unit for 30 days; right knee: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Based on California MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, an interferential unit postoperatively would also not be indicated as the claimant's need for operative intervention in this case has not been established.