

Case Number:	CM13-0038721		
Date Assigned:	12/18/2013	Date of Injury:	01/19/2002
Decision Date:	04/10/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/17/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/01/2013

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 Chiropractic and Acupuncture, 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:

The injured worker is a 46year old female who reported bilateral shoulder, left hip, left arm, left wrist, upper and lower back and left knee pain from injury sustained on 1/29/2002 during baton training as a correctional officer. MRI of the lumbar spine dated 2/22/2006 revealed mild intraforaminal disc bulge at L4-L5 and L5-S1. MRI of the lumbar spine dated 7/8/13 revealed no compression. The patient has been diagnosed with myofascial pain syndrome, cervicgia, lumbago, pain in hip, degenerative disc disease. The patient has been treated with medication and acupuncture. According to Utilization Review, she had a total of 26 acupuncture visits. The primary treating physician is recommending an additional 12 acupuncture treatments. According to the notes dated 8/12/13, she feels as though acupuncture decreased her pain by 50-60%; decreased headaches, insomnia and fatigue. Her pain is 4/10 without medication and 3/10 with medication. She has burning pain in the neck and traps bilaterally. According to the notes dated 9/9/13, after an additional 2 visits of acupuncture, her pain is reduced by 60%. She has decreased headaches, insomnia and fatigue. She is able to walk more. She also has been having increased numbness and weakness in bilateral lower extremity. Currently she rates her pain 7/10 without medication and 3/10 with medication. According to the notes, she had improvement with acupuncture treatment; however, according to the guidelines, 3-6 treatments are sufficient to have functional improvement. Additional visits may be rendered if additional functional improvement is documented.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TWELVE (12) ADDITIONAL ACUPUNCTURE SESSIONS.(DOS:09/10/2013): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: According to the Acupuncture Medical treatment Guidelines page 8-9. "Acupuncture is used as an option when pain medication is reduced and not tolerated, it may be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to hasten functional recovery". "Time to produce function improvement: 3-6 treatments. 2) Frequency: 1-3 times per week. 3) Optimum duration: 1-2 months. Acupuncture treatments may be extended if functional improvement is documented". The employee has had prior acupuncture treatment. The medical notes stated the employee indicated that acupuncture decreased the pain by 60%, reduced headaches, insomnia and fatigue; the employee was able to walk more. The employee had improvement with prior treatment; however, according to the guidelines, an additional 3-6 treatments may be sufficient to have functional improvement. Additional visits may be rendered if the employee has documented additional objective functional improvement. According to the review of evidence and guidelines, 12 acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.