

Case Number:	CM13-0041736		
Date Assigned:	01/15/2014	Date of Injury:	01/19/2008
Decision Date:	07/11/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/16/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/30/2013

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:

The patient is a 68-year-old male who has submitted a claim for degenerative arthritis of the left knee, status post left knee arthroscopy (01/10/2013); associated with an industrial injury date of 01/19/2008. Medical records from 01/07/2013 to 12/19/2013 were reviewed and showed that patient complained of gradual increase in pain and discomfort of the left knee. Since Euflexxa injections on June 2013, patient noted significantly decreased pain, allowing patient to perform ADLs such as walking, climbing stairs, dressing up, and providing overall mobility without significant pain and discomfort. He reports 80-90%. Currently, he is gradually deteriorating as the pain is increasing. Physical examination showed grinding and crepitus with flexion and extension. There was localized swelling of the left knee. No medial or lateral laxity was noted. Knee flexion was limited to 90 degrees. Distal neurovascular structures are intact. Treatment to date has included medications, knee braces, physical therapy, and left knee arthroscopy, left knee partial lateral meniscectomy, and left knee debridement and medial and lateral tibiofemoral chondroplasty (01/10/2013). Utilization review, dated 10/06/2013, denied the request for left knee Euflexxa injections x3 because there was no documented objective functional improvement from previous injections, and guidelines state that improvements should last for 6 months or more.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

LEFT KNEE EUFLEXXA INJECTIONS TIMES 3: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Knee & Leg chapter, Hyaluronic acid injections.

Decision rationale: The CA MTUS does not address this topic. Per the Strength of Evidence hierarchy established by the California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Workers' Compensation, Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Knee and Leg Chapter was used instead. ODG states that hyaluronic acid injections are recommended in patients with significantly symptomatic osteoarthritis. Repeat courses of the hyaluronans are safe and effective in the treatment of pain associated with OA of the knee. Repeat series of injections are recommended if there is documentation of significant improvement in symptoms for 6 months or more. In this case, the patient had received a series of three left knee Euflexxa injections from 05/29/2013 to 06/07/2013 with symptomatic and functional improvement (i.e. ability to perform ADLs); however, the duration of the response was not mentioned. The guidelines recommend repeat injections when there is significant improvement of symptoms for at least 6 months. The medical necessity was not established due to insufficient information. Therefore, the request for Left Knee Euflexxa Injections Times 3 is not medically necessary.