

Case Number:	CM13-0042282		
Date Assigned:	12/27/2013	Date of Injury:	05/21/2013
Decision Date:	07/28/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/07/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/17/2013

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 a licensed Psychologist and is licensed to practice in Texas. 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 64-year-old male who reported an injury on 05/21/2013 due to work related stress. The injured worker complained of fear of losing his job, abandonment, loss of appetite, and nausea. He also felt sad, helpless, and hopeless. On 08/27/2013, the psychological evaluation revealed that the injured worker's mood was sad and anxious. His intellectual functioning appeared to be average; however, it seemed to be impacted by his emotional condition. He did not report any suicidal or homicidal ideations. The injured worker had diagnoses of depressive disorder, anxiety disorder, insomnia related to anxiety disorder, and stress related physiological response. There was no documentation provided in regards to past treatment methods. A list of current medications for the injured worker was not submitted for review. The current treatment plan is for psychotherapy once a week for 12 weeks, hypnotherapy once a week for 12 weeks, and biofeedback training once a week for 12 weeks. The rationale was not submitted for review. The Request for Authorization Form was dated 09/27/2013.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Group Psychotherapy once a week for twelve weeks: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Behavioral Interventions Page(s): 23.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Behavioral interventions Page(s): 23.

Decision rationale: The request for group psychotherapy once a week for 12 weeks is not medically necessary. The injured worker has a history of depression and anxiety. The California MTUS guidelines state that psychotherapy recommendations are: initial trial of 3-4 psychotherapy visits over 2 weeks. With evidence of objective functional improvement, total of up to 6-10 visits over 5-6 weeks (individual sessions). Based on the documentation provided, there is no indication that the injured worker attended therapy prior to this request. The request for group psychotherapy once a week for 12 weeks exceeds the guidelines recommendations for total duration of care. Given the above, the request for group psychotherapy once a week for 12 weeks is not medically necessary.

Hypnotherapy once a week for twelve weeks: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG. Mental and Stress Chapter.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG. Mental and Stress, Hypnosis.

Decision rationale: The request for hypnotherapy once a week for 12 weeks is not medically necessary. The injured worker has a history of anxiety and depression. The ODG guidelines state that hypnosis is recommended if used by credentialed health care professionals, who are properly trained in the clinical use of hypnosis and are working within the areas of their professional expertise. There are a number of indications for using hypnosis in the treatment of PTSD. There are a number of contraindications for using traditional hypnotic techniques in the treatment of PTSD: In the rare cases of individuals who are refractory or minimally responsive to suggestions, hypnotic techniques may not be the best choice, because there is some evidence that hypnotizability is related to treatment outcome efficacy. The guidelines also state that the number of visits should be contained within the total number of psychotherapy visits. The request for hypnotherapy once a week for 12 weeks is excessive. According to the evidence-based guidelines, hypnosis is used in treatment of patients with PTSD; however, the documentation provided did not indicate a diagnosis PTSD for the injured worker. Given the above, the request for hypnotherapy once a week for 12 weeks is not medically necessary.

Biofeedback training once a week for twelve weeks: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 24.

Decision rationale: The request for biofeedback training once a week for 12 weeks is not medically necessary. The injured worker has a history of anxiety and depression. The

CaliforniaMTUS guidelines state that biofeedback is not recommended as a stand-alone treatment, but recommended as an option in a cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) program to facilitate exercise therapy and return to activity. The request for group psychotherapy and hypnotherapy were not certified. As a result, the request for biofeedback training is non-certified, since it is not recommended as a standalone treatment. Therefore, the request is not medically supported at this time. Given the above, the request for biofeedback training once a week for 12 weeks is not medically necessary.