

Case Number:	CM13-0051094		
Date Assigned:	01/15/2014	Date of Injury:	03/27/1998
Decision Date:	03/26/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/24/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/21/2013

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 licensed in Psychology 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 claimant is a 54 year-old female (██████████) with a date of injury of 3/27/98. The mechanism of injury is not specifically found within the medical records. There is mention that the claimant experienced a sudden onset of low back pain while employed as a family service advocate with ██████████. In her "Periodic Office Visit; Request for Authorization" report dated 1/8/14, ██████████ diagnosed the claimant with: (1) Spinal/lumbar DDD; (2) Lumbar radiculopathy; and (3) Lumbar facet syndrome. It was also noted that the claimant's "mood has been fluctuating and she reports depressed mood and less energy to do things." In his 2/2/13 "Psychological Pain Management Progress Report", ██████████ diagnosed the claimant with: Pain disorder associated with psychological factors and a medical condition, chronic and major depressive disorder, single episode, moderate. The claimant has been treated in the past with psychotherapy and psychotropic medications. It is the claimant's psychiatric issues that are most relevant to this review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

One Referral to a Psychologist: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 15 Stress Related Conditions Page(s): 388-402.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 100-101.

Decision rationale: The CA MTUS guideline regarding psychological evaluations is being used as reference in this case. Based on the review of the medical records, the claimant was evaluated and treated by [REDACTED] following the initial evaluation on 3/8/11 through 2/2/13. She completed a total of 10 CBT sessions over that period of time and worked on coping with her injury and associated symptoms. Based on [REDACTED] observations and medical judgment, the claimant is now in need of further psychological services. The ODG recommends the use of psychological evaluations and states, "Psychological evaluations are generally accepted, well-established diagnostic procedures not only with selected use in pain problems, but also with more widespread use in chronic pain populations. Diagnostic evaluations should distinguish between conditions that are preexisting, aggravated by the current injury or work related. Psychosocial evaluations should determine if further psychosocial interventions are indicated. The interpretations of the evaluation should provide clinicians with a better understanding of the patient in their social environment, thus allowing for more effective rehabilitation" Given that the claimant last received psychological services in February 2013 and her last evaluation is dated 3/8/11, an updated evaluation appears reasonable. Therefore, the request for "1 referral to psychologist" is medically necessary. Once the claimant is evaluated, updated treatment recommendations will be provided.